CLARISSA;

OR, THE

HISTORY OF A YOUNG LADY:

COMPREHENDING THE

MOST IMPORTANT CONCERNS

OF

PRIVATE LIFE;

AND

PARTICULARLY SHEWING THE DISTRESSES

THAT MAY ATTEND THE

MISCONDUCT

BOTH OF

PARENTS AND CHILDREN,

IN RELATION TO MARRIAGE.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOL. VI.

A NEW EDITION,

WITH THE LAST CORRECTIONS BY THE AUTHOR.

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1810.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASVATI MAHAL

THE

HISTORY

1124

OF

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER I.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Tuesday morn. June 20.

WELL, Jack, now are we upon another foot together. This dear creature will not let *me be good.* She is now authorizing all my plots by her own example.

Thou must be partial in the highest degree, if now thou blamest me for resuming my former schemes, since in that case I shall but follow her clue. No forced construction of her actions do I make on this occasion, in order to justify a bad cause or a worse intention. A slight pretence, indeed, served the wolf, when he had a mind to quarrel with the lamb; but this is not now my case.

For here [wouldst thou have thought it?] taking advantage of Dorcas's compassionate temper, and of some warm expressions, which the tender-hearted

wench let fall against the cruelty of men; and wishing to have it in her power to serve her; has she given her the following note, signed by her maiden name: for she has thought fit, in positive and plain words, to own to the pitying Dorcas, that she is not married.

Monday, June 19. . . .

I the underwritten do hereby promise, that, on my co[illegible]ing into possession of my own estate, I will prov[illegible] for Dorcas Martindale in a gentlewoman-like manne[illegible] in my own house: or, if I do not soon obtain tha[illegible] possession, or should first die, I do hereby bind myself, my executors and administrators, to pay to her, or her order, during the term of her natural life, the sum of five pounds on each of the four usual quarterly days in the year, that is to say, twenty pounds by the year; on condition that she faithfully assist me in my escape from an illegal confinement, under which I now labour. The first quarterly payment to commence and be payable at the end of three months immediately following the day of my deliverance. And I do also promis[illegible] to give her, as a testimony of my honour in the r[illegible]t, a diamond ring, which I have showed her. Witness my hand this nineteenth day of June, in the year above written.

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Now, Jack, what terms wouldst thou have me to keep with such a sweet corruptress? Seest thou not how she hates me? Seest thou not, that she is resolved never to forgive me? Seest thou not, however, that she must disgrace herself in the eye of the world, if she actually should escape? That she must be subjected to infinite distress and hazard! For whom has she to receive and protect her? Yet to determine to risk all these evils! And further-

more to stoop to artifice, to be guilty of the reigning vice of the times, of bribery and corruption! O Jack, Jack! *say* not, *write* not, another word in her favour!

Thou hast blamed me for bringing her to this house: but had I carried her to any other in England, where there would have been one servant or inmate capable either of *compassion* or *corruption*, what must have been the consequence?

But seest thou not, however, that in this flimsy contrivance, the dear implacable, like a drowning man, catches at a straw to save herself! A straw shall she find to be the refuge she has resorted to.

LETTER II.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Tuesday morn. 10 o'clock.

VERY ill—exceeding ill—as Dorcas tells me, in order to avoid seeing me—and yet the dear soul may be so in her *mind*. But is not that equivocation? Some one passion, predominating in every human breast, breaks through principle, and controls us all. Mine is *love* and *revenge* taking turns. Hers is *hatred*—but this is my consolation, that *hatred appeased is love begun; or love renewed*, I may rather say, if love ever had footing here!

But *reflectioning* apart, thou seest, Jack, that her plot is beginning to work. To-morrow it is to break out.

I have been abroad, to set on foot a plot of circumvention. All fair, now, Belford!

I insisted upon visiting my indisposed fair one. Dorcas made officious excuses for her. I cursed the wench in her hearing for her impertinence;

and stamped, and made a clutter; which was improved into an apprehension to the lady that I would have flung her faithful confidante from the top of the stairs to the bottom.

He is a violent wretch!—But, Dorcas, [*dear* Dorcas, now it is] thou shalt have a friend in me to the last day of my life.

And what now, Jack, dost think the name of her *good angel* is!——Why *Dorcas Martindale*, christian and super (no more Wykes) as in the promissory note in my former—and the dear creature has bound her to her by the *most solemn* obligations, *besides* the tie of interest.

Whither, madam, do you design to go when you get out of this house?

I will throw myself into the first open house I can find; and beg protection till I can get a coach, or a lodging in some honest family.

What will you do for clothes, madam? I doubt you'll not be able to take any away with you, but what you'll have on.

O, no matter for clothes, if I can but get out of this house.

What will you do for money, madam? I have heard his honour express his concern, that he could not prevail upon you to be obliged to him, though he apprehended that you must be short of money.

O, I have rings and other valuables. Indeed I have but four guineas, and two of them I found lately wrapt up in a bit of lace, designed for a charitable use: but now, alas! charity begins at home! —But I have one dear friend left, if she be living, as I hope in God she is! to whom I can be obliged, if I want. O, Dorcas! I must ere now have heard from her, if I had had fair play.

Well, madam, yours is a hard lot. I pity you at my heart!

Thank you, Dorcas!—I am unhappy, that I did not think *before*, that I might have confided in thy pity, and in thy sex!

I pitied you, madam, often and often: but you were always, as I thought, diffident of me. And then I doubted not but you were married; and I thought his honour was unkindly used by you. So that I thought it my duty to wish well to his honour, rather than to what I thought to be your honours, madam. Would to heaven, that I had known before that you were not married!—Such a lady! Such a fortune! To be so sadly betrayed!——

Ah, Dorcas! I was basely drawn in! My youth—my ignorance of the world—and I have some things to reproach myself with when I look back.

Lord, madam, what deceitful creatures are these men!—Neither oaths, nor vows—I am sure—I am sure! [and then with her apron she gave her eyes half a dozen hearty rubs] I may curse the time that I came into this house!

Here was accounting for her bold eyes! And was it not better for Dorcas to give up a house which the lady could not think worse of than she did, in order to gain the reputation of sincerity, than by offering to vindicate it, to make her proffered services suspected.

Poor Dorcas!—Bless me! how little do we, who have lived all our time in the country, know of this wicked town!

Had I *been able to write*, cried the veteran wench, I should certainly have given some other near relations I have in Wales a little *inkling* of matters; and they would have saved me from——from——from——

Her sobs were enough. The apprehensions of

women on such subjects are ever aforehand with speech.

And then, sobbing on, she lifted her apron to her face again. She showed me how.

Poor Dorcas!—Again wiping her own charming eyes.

All love, all compassion, is this dear creature to every one in affliction, but me.

And would not an aunt protect her kinswoman? —abominable wretch!

I can't—I can't—I can't—say, my aunt was privy to it. She gave me good advice. She knew not for a great while that I was—that I was—that I was—ugh! ugh!—ugh!—

No more, no more, good Dorcas—What a world do we live in!—What a house am I in!—But come, don't weep: (though she herself could not forbear) my being betrayed into it, though to my own ruin, may be a happy event for thee: and if I live, it shall.

I thank you, my good lady, blubbering. I am sorry, very sorry, you have had so hard a lot. But it may be the saving of my soul, if I can get to your ladyship's house. Had I but known that your ladyship was not married, I would have eat my own flesh, before, before, before——

Dorcas sobbed and wept. The lady sighed and wept also.

But now, Jack, for a serious reflection upon the premises.

How will the good folks account for it, that Satan has such faithful instruments, and that the bond of wickedness is a stronger bond than the ties of virtue; as if it were the nature of the human mind to be villanous? For here, had Dorcas been *good*, and been tempted as she was tempted to any thing

evil, I make no doubt but she would have yielded to the temptation.

And cannot our fraternity in an hundred instances give proof of the like predominance of vice over virtue? And that we have risked more to serve and promote the interests of the former, than ever a good man did to serve a good man or a good cause? For have we not been prodigal of life and fortune? Have we not defied the civil magistrate upon occasion? And have we not attempted rescues, and dared all things, only to extricate a pounded profligate?

Whence, Jack, can this be?

O! I have it, I believe. The vicious are as bad as they can be; and do the devil's work without looking after; while he is continually spreading snares for the others; and, like a skilful angler, suiting his baits to the fish he angles for.

Nor let even *honest* people, so *called*, blame poor Dorcas for her fidelity in a bad cause. For does not the *general*, who implicitly serves an ambitious prince in his unjust designs upon his neighbours, or upon his own oppressed subjects; and even the *lawyer*, who, for the sake of a paltry fee, undertakes to whiten a black cause, and to defend it against one he knows to be good, do the very same thing as Dorcas? And are they not both every whit as culpable? Yet the one shall be dubbed a hero, the other called an admirable fellow, and be contended for by every client, and his double-tongued abilities shall carry him through all the high preferments of the law with reputation and applause.

Well, but what shall be done, since the lady is so much determined on removing!—Is there no way to oblige her, and yet to make the very act subservient to my own views? I fancy such a way may be found out.

I will study for it——

Suppose I suffer her to make an escape? Her heart is in it. If she effect it, the triumph she will have over me upon it will be a counterbalance for all she has suffered.

I will oblige her if I can.

LETTER III.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

TIRED with a succession of fatiguing days and sleepless nights, and with contemplating the precarious situation I stand in with my beloved, I fell into a profound reverie; which brought on sleep; and that produced a dream; a fortunate dream; which, as I imagine, will afford my working mind the means to effect the obliging double purpose my heart is now once more set upon.

What, as I have often contemplated, is the enjoyment of the finest woman in the world, to the contrivance, the bustle, the surprises, and at last the happy conclusion of a well-laid plot!—The charming *round-abouts,* to come the *nearest way home;*—the doubts; the apprehensions; the heart-achings; the meditated triumphs—these are the joys that make the blessing dear—for all the rest, what is it?—What but to find an angel in imagination dwindled down to a woman in fact?——But to my dream——

Methought it was about nine on Wednesday morning, that a chariot with a dowager's arms upon the doors, and in it a grave matronly lady [not unlike mother H. in the face; but in her heart, O how unlike!] stopped at a grocer's shop, about ten doors on the other side of the way, in order to buy some

groceries: and methought Dorcas, having been out to see if the coast were clear for her lady's flight, and if a coach were to be got near the place, espied this chariot with the dowager's arms, and this matronly lady: and what, methought, did Dorcas, that subtle traitress, do, but whip up to the old matronly lady, and lifting up her voice, say, Good my lady, permit me one word with your ladyship!

What thou hast to say to me, say on, quoth the old lady; the grocer retiring, and standing aloof, to give Dorcas leave to speak; who, methought, in words like these, accosted the lady:

'You seem, madam, to be a very good lady; and here in this neighbourhood, at a house of no high repute, is an innocent lady of rank and fortune, beautiful as a May morning, and youthful as a rose-bud, and full as sweet and lovely; who has been tricked thither by a wicked gentleman, practised in the ways of the town; and this very night will she be ruined if she get not out of his hands. Now, O lady! if you will extend your compassionate goodness to this fair young lady, in whom, the moment you behold her, you will see cause to believe all I say; and let her have but a place in your chariot, and remain in your protection for one day only, till she can send a man and horse to her rich and powerful friends; you may save from ruin a lady who has no equal for virtue as well as beauty.'

Methought the old lady, moved with Dorcas's story, answered and said, 'Hasten, O damsel, who in a happy moment art come to put it in my power to serve the innocent and the virtuous, which it has always been my delight to do: hasten to this young lady, and bid her hie hither to me with all speed; and tell her, that my chariot shall be her

asylum: and if I find all that thou sayest true, my house shall be her sanctuary, and I will protect her from all her oppressors.'

Hereupon, methought, this traitress Dorcas hied back to the lady, and made report of what she had done. And, methought, the lady highly approved of Dorcas's proceeding, and blessed her for her good thought.

And I lifted up mine eyes, and behold the lady issued out of the house, and without looking back, ran to the chariot with the dowager's coat upon it; and was received by the matronly lady with open arms, and 'Welcome, welcome, welcome, fair young lady, who so well answer the description of the faithful damsel. And I will carry you instantly to my house, where you shall meet with all the good usage your heart can wish for, till you can apprise your rich and powerful friends of your past dangers, and present escape.'

'Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, worthy, thrice worthy lady, who afford so kindly your protection to a most unhappy young creature, who has been basely seduced and betrayed, and brought to the very brink of destruction.'

Methought then the matronly lady, who had, by the time the young lady came to her, bought and paid for the goods she wanted, ordered her coachman to drive home with all speed; who stopped not till he had arrived in a certain street not far from Lincoln's Inn Fields, where the matronly lady lived in a sumptuous dwelling, replete with damsels who wrought curiously in muslins, cambricks, and fine linen, and in every good work that industrious damsels love to be employed about, except the loom, and the spinning-wheel.

And methought, all the way the young lady and the old lady rode, and after they came in, till din-

ner was ready, the young lady filled up the time with the dismal account of her wrongs and her sufferings, the like of which was never heard by mortal ear; and this in so moving a manner, that the good old lady did nothing but weep, and sigh, and sob, and inveigh against the arts of wicked men, and against that abominable Squire Lovelace, who was a *plotting villain*, methought she said; and more than that, an *unchained Beelzebub*.

Methought I was in a dreadful agony, when I found the lady had escaped; and in my wrath had like to have slain Dorcas, and our mother, and every one I met. But, by some quick transition, and strange metamorphosis, which dreams do not usually account for, methought, all of a sudden, this matronly lady was turned into the famous Mother H. herself; and, being an old acquaintance of Mother Sinclair, was prevailed upon to assist in my plot upon the young lady.

Then, methought, followed a strange scene; for mother H. longing to hear more of the young lady's story, and night being come, besought her to accept of a place in her own bed, in order to have all the talk to themselves. For methought, two young nieces of hers had broken in upon them in the middle of the dismal tale.

Accordingly, going early to bed, and the sad story being resumed, with as great earnestness on one side, as attention on the other, before the young lady had gone far in it, mother H. methought was taken with a fit of the colic; and her tortures increasing, was obliged to rise to get a cordial she used to find specific in this disorder, to which she was unhappily subject.

Having thus risen, and stept to her closet, methought she let fall the wax taper in her return; and then [O metamorphosis still stranger than the

former! What unaccountable; things are dreams! coming to bed again in the dark, the young lady, to her infinite astonishment, grief, and surprise, found mother H. turned into a young person of the other sex: and although Lovelace was the *abhorred of her soul,* yet, fearing it was some *other* person, it was matter of some consolation to her, when she found it was no other than himself, and that she had been still the bedfellow of but *one* and the *same* man.

A strange promiscuous huddle of adventures followed, scenes perpetually shifting; now nothing heard from the lady, but sighs, groans, exclamations, faintings, dyings—from the gentleman, but vows, promises, protestations, *disclaimers of purposes pursued;* and all the gentle and ungentle pressures of the lover's warfare.

Then, as quick as thought (for dreams, thou knowest, confine not themselves to the rules of the drama) ensued recoveries, lyings-in, christenings, the smiling boy, amply, even in *her own* opinion, rewarding the suffering mother.

Then the grandfather's estate yielded up, possession taken of it: living very happily upon it: her beloved Norton her companion; Miss Howe her visitor; and (admirable! thrice admirable!) enabled to *compare notes* with her; a charming girl, by the same father, to her friend's charming boy: who, as they grow up, in order to consolidate their mammas' friendship (for neither have dreams regard to *consanguinity*) intermarry; change names by act of parliament, to enjoy my estate—and I know not what of the like incongruous stuff.

I awoke, as thou mayest believe, in great disorder, and rejoiced to find my charmer in the next room, and Dorcas honest.

Now thou wilt say this was a very odd dream.

And yet, (for I am a strange dreamer) it is not altogether improbable that something like it may happen; as the pretty simpleton has the weakness to confide in Dorcas, whom till now she disliked.

But I forgot to tell thee one part of my dream; and that was, that, the next morning, the lady gave way to such transports of grief and resentment, that she was with difficulty diverted from making an attempt upon her own life. But however at last was prevailed upon to resolve to live, and to make the best of the matter. A letter, methought, from Captain Tomlinson helping to pacify her, written to apprise me, that her uncle Harlowe would certainly be at Kentish Town on Wednesday night, June 28, the following day (the 29th) being his birth-day; and he doubly desirous, on that account, that our nuptials should be then privately solemnized in his presence.

But *is* Thursday the 29th her uncle's anniversary, methinks thou askest?—It is; or else the day of celebration should have been earlier still. Three weeks ago I heard her say it was; and I have down the birth-day of every one of her family, and the wedding-day of her father and mother. The minutest circumstances are often of great service, in matters of the last importance.

And what sayest thou now to my dream?

Who says, that, sleeping and waking, I have not fine helps from some *body*, some *spirit* rather, as thou'lt be apt to say? But no wonder that a Beelzebub has his devilkins to attend his call.

I can have no manner of doubt of succeeding in mother H.'s part of the scheme; for will the lady (who resolves to throw herself into the *first house she can enter*, or to bespeak the protection of the *first person she meets*; and who thinks there can be no danger *out* of this house, equal to what she ap-

prehends from me *in* it) scruple to accept of the chariot of a dowager, accidentally offering? And the lady's protection engaged by her faithful Dorcas, so highly bribed to promote her escape?—And then Mrs. H. has the air and appearance of a venerable matron, and is not such a forbidding devil as Mrs. Sinclair.

The pretty simpleton knows nothing of the world; nor that people who have money, never want assistants in their views, be they what they will. How else could the princes of the earth be so implicitly served as they are, *change they hands ever so often*, and be their purposes *ever so wicked?*

If I can but get her to *go on* with me till Wednesday next week, we shall be settled together pretty quietly by that time. And indeed if she has any gratitude, and has in her the least of her sex's foibles, she must think I deserve her favour, by the pains she has cost me. For dearly do they all love that men should take pains about them and for them.

And here, for the present, I will lay down my pen, and congratulate myself upon my happy invention (since her obstinacy puts me once more upon exercising it)—but with this resolution, I think, that, if the present contrivance fail me, I will exert all the faculties of my mind, all my talents, to procure for myself a legal right to her favour, and that in defiance of all my antipathies to the married state; and of the suggestions of the great devil out of the house, and of his secret agents in it—since, if *now* she is not to be prevailed upon, or drawn in, it will be in vain to attempt her further.

LETTER IV.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Tuesday night, June 20.

No admittance yet to my charmer! She is very ill—in a violent fever, Dorcas thinks. Yet will have no advice.

Dorcas tells her how much I am concerned at it.

But again let me ask, does this lady do right to make herself ill, when she is *not* ill? for my own part, libertine as people think me, when I had *occasion* to be sick, I took a dose of ipecacuanha, that I might not be guilty of a falsehood; and most heartily sick was I; as she, who then pitied me, full well knew. But here to pretend to very ill, only to get an opportunity to run away, in order to avoid forgiving a man who has offended her, how unchristian! — If good folks allow themselves in in these breaches of a known duty, and in these presumptuous contrivances to deceive, who, Belford, shall blame us?

I have a strange notion, that the matronly lady, will be certainly at the grocer's shop at the hour of nine to-morrow morning: for Dorcas heard me tell Mrs. Sinclair, that I should go out at eight precisely; and then she is to try for a coach: and if the dowager's chariot should happen to be there, how lucky will it be for my charmer! How strangely will my dream be made out!

* * *

I HAVE just received a letter from Capt. Tomlinson. Is it not wonderful? For that was part of my dream.

I shall always have a prodigious regard to dreams henceforward. I know not but I may write a book

upon that subject: for my own experience will furnish out a great part of it. *Glanville of Witches, Baxter's History of Spirits and Apparations,* and the Royal Pedant's *Demonology,* will be nothing at all to *Lovelace's Reveries.*

The letter is just what I dreamed it to be. I am only concerned that uncle John's anniversary did not happen three or four days sooner; for should any *new* misfortune befal my charmer, she may not be able to support her spirits so long as till Thursday in the next week. Yet it will give me the more time for new expedients, should my present contrivance fail; which I cannot however suppose.

TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

DEAR SIR, Monday, June 19.

I CAN now return you joy, for the joy you have given me, as well as my dear friend Mr. Harlowe, in the news of his beloved niece's happy recovery; for he is determined to comply with *her* wishes and *yours,* and to give her to you with his own hand.

As the ceremony has been necessarily delayed by reason of her illness, and as Mr. Harlowe's birth-day is on Thursday the 29th of this instant June, when he enters into the sixty-fourth year of his age: and as time may be wanted to complete the dear lady's recovery; he is very desirous that the marriage shall be solemnized upon it; that he may afterwards have double joy on that day to the end of his life.

For this purpose he intends to set out privately, so as to be at Kentish Town on Wednesday se'nnight in the evening.

All the family used, he says, to meet to celebrate it with him; but as they are at present in too unhappy a situation for that, he will give out,

that, not being able to bear the day at home, he has resolved to be absent for two or three days.

He will set out on horseback, attended only by one trusty servant, for the greater privacy. He will be at the most creditable looking public house there, expecting you both next morning, if he hear nothing from me to prevent him. And he will go to town with you after the ceremony is performed, in the coach he supposes you will come in.

He is very desirous, that I should be present on the occasion. But *this* I have promised him, at his request, that I will be up before the day, in order to see the settlements executed, and every thing properly prepared.

He is very glad you have the licence ready.

He speaks very kindly of you, Mr. Lovelace; and says, that if any of the family stand out after he has seen the ceremony performed, he will separate from them, and unite himself to his dear niece and her interests.

I owned to you, when in town last, that I took slight notice to my dear friend of the misunderstanding between you and his niece, and that I did this, for fear the lady should have shown any little discontent in his presence, had I been able to prevail upon him to go up in person, as then was doubtful. But I hope nothing of that discontent remains now.

My absence, when your messenger came, must excuse me for not writing by him.

Be pleased to make my most respectful compliments acceptable to the admirable lady, and believe me to be

Your most faithful and obedient servant,

ANTONY TOMLINSON.

This letter I sealed, and broke open. It was

brought, thou mayst suppose, by a particular messenger; the seal such a one as the writer need not be ashamed of. I took care to inquire after the captain's health, in my beloved's hearing; and it is now ready to be produced as a pacifier according as she shall *take on* or *resent*, if the two metamorphoses happen pursuant to my wonderful dream; as, having great faith in dreams, I dare say they will.—I think it will not be amiss, in changing my clothes, to have this letter of the worthy captain lie in my beloved's way.

LETTER V.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Wedn. noon, June 21.

What shall I say now!—I, who but a few hours ago had such faith in dreams, and had proposed to begin my treatise of *dreams sleeping* and *dreams waking*, and was pleasing myself with the dialogues between the old matronly lady and the young lady, and with the two metamorphoses (absolutely assured that every thing would happen as my dream chalked it out;) shall never more depend upon those flying follies, those illusions of a fancy depraved and run mad.

Thus confoundedly have matters happened.

I went out at eight o'clock in high good humour with myself, in order to give the sought-for opportunity to the plotting mistress and corrupted maid; only ordering Will to keep a good look out for fear his lady should mistrust my plot, or mistake a hackney coach for the dowager lady's chariot. But first I sent to know how she did; and received for answer, very ill:—had a very bad

night: which latter was but too probable: since this *I* know, that people who have plots in their heads as seldom *have* as *deserve* good ones.

I desired a physician might be called in; but was refused.

I took a walk in St. James's Park, congratulating myself all the way on my rare inventions: then, impatient, I took coach, with one of the windows *quite* up, the other *almost* up, playing at bo-peep at every chariot I saw pass in my way to Lincoln's Inn Fields: and when arrived there I sent the coachman to desire any one of mother H.'s family to come to me to the coach side, not doubting but I should have intelligence of my fair fugitive there; it being then half an hour after ten.

A servant came, who gave me to understand, that the matronly lady was just returned by herself in the chariot.

Frighted out of my wits, I alighted, and heard from the mother's own mouth, that Dorcas had engaged her to protect the lady; but came to tell her afterwards, that she had changed her mind, and would not quit the house.

Quite astonished, not knowing what might have happened, I ordered the coachman to lash away to our mother's.

Arriving here in an instant, the first word I asked was, if the lady was safe?

Mr. Lovelace gives here a very circumstantial relation of all that passed between the lady and Dorcas. But as he could only guess at her motives for refusing to go off, when Dorcas told her, that she had engaged for her the protection of the dowager lady, it is thought proper to omit his relation, and to supply it by some memoranda *of the lady's. But*

it is first necessary to account for the occasion on which those memoranda *were made.*

*The reader may remember, that in the letter written to Miss Howe on her escape to Hampstead *, she promises to give her the particulars of her flight at leisure.*

She had indeed thoughts of continuing her account of every thing that had passed between her and Mr. Lovelace; since her last narrative letter. But the uncertainty she was in from that time, with the execrable treatment she met with on her being deluded back again: followed by a week's delirium; had hitherto hindered her from prosecuting her intention. But, nevertheless having it still in her view to perform her promise as soon as she had opportunity, she made minutes of every thing as it passed, in order to help her memory:—which, *as she observes in one place,* she could less 'trust to since her late disorders than before.'

In these minutes, or book of memoranda, *she observes,* 'That having apprehensions, that Dorcas might be a traitress, she would have got away while she was gone out to see for a coach; and actually slid down stairs with that intent. But that, seeing Mrs. Sinclair in the entry, [*whom Dorcas had planted there while she went out*] she speeded up again, unseen.'

She then went up to the dining-room, and saw the letter of Captain Tomlinson: on which she observes in her memorandum-book as follows:

'How am I puzzled now!—He might leave this letter on purpose: none of the other papers left

* See Vol. V. p. 57.

with it being of any consequence: what is the alternative?—To stay, and be the wife of the vilest of men—how my heart resists that!—To attempt to get off, and fail, ruin inevitable! Dorcas *may* betray me!—I doubt she is *still* his implement!—At his going out, he whispered her, as I saw, unobserved—in a very familiar manner too—Never fear, sir, with a courtsy.

'In her agreeing to connive at my escape, she provided not for her own safety, if I got away: yet had reason, in that case, to expect his vengeance. And wants not forethought.—To have taken her *with me*, was to be in the power of her intelligence, if a faithless creature.—Let me, however, though I part not with my caution, keep my charity!—Can there be any woman so vile to a woman?—O yes! Mrs. Sinclair: her aunt.—The Lord deliver me!—But alas! I have put myself out of the course of his protection by the *natural* means—and am already ruined! A father's curse likewise against me! Having made vain all my friends' cautions and solicitudes, I must not hope for miracles in my favour!

'If I do escape, what may become of me, a poor, helpless, deserted creature!—Helpless from sex!—From circumstances!—Exposed to every danger!—Lord protect me!

'His vile man not gone with him!—Lurking hereabouts, no doubt, to watch my steps!—I *will* not go away by the chariot, however.

* * *

'THAT this chariot should come so opportunely! So like his many *opportunelies!*—That Dorcas should have the sudden thought! Should have the *courage* with the thought, to address a lady in behalf of an absolute stranger to that lady! That the lady should so readily consent! Yet the transaction

between them to take up so much time, their distance in degree considered: for arduous as the case was, and precious as the time, Dorcas was gone above half an hour! Yet the chariot was said to be ready at a grocer's not many doors off!

'Indeed some elderly ladies are talkative: and there are, no doubt, *some* good people in the world—

'But that it should chance to be a widow lady, who could do what she pleased! That Dorcas should know her to be so by the lozenge! Persons in her station not usually so knowing, I believe, in heraldry.

'Yet some may! for servants are fond of deriving *collateral* honours and distinctions, as I may call them, from the quality or rank of people whom they serve. But his sly servant not gone with him. Then this letter of Tomlinson!——

'Although I am resolved never to have this wretch, yet, may I not *throw myself into my uncle's protection at Kentish Town or Highgate, if I cannot escape before: and so get clear of him?* May not the evil I know, be less than what I may fall into, if I can avoid further villany? Further villany he has not yet threatened; freely and justly as I have treated him!—I will not go, I think. At least, unless I can send this fellow out of the way *.

* * *

'The fellow a villain! The wench, I doubt, a vile wench. At last concerned for her own safety. Plays off and on about a coach.

'All my hopes of getting off, at present over!— Unhappy creature! to what further evils art thou

* She tried to do this; but was prevented by the fellow's pretending to put his ancle out, by a slip down stairs.—*A trick*, says his contriving master, in his omitted relation, *I had taught him, on a like occasion, at Amiens.*

reserved! O how my heart rises, at the necessity I must still be under to see and converse with so very vile a man!'

LETTER VI.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Wednesday afternoon.

Disappointed in her meditated escape; obliged, against her will, to meet me in the dining-room; and perhaps apprehensive of being upbraided for her art in feigning herself ill; I *expected* that the dear perverse would *begin* with me with spirit and indignation. But I was in hopes, from the gentleness of her natural disposition; from the consideration which I expected from her on her situation; from the contents of the letter of Captain Tomlinson, which Dorcas told me she had seen; and from the time she had had to cool and reflect since she last admitted me to her presence, that she would not have carried it so strongly through as she did.

As I entered the dining-room, I congratulated her and myself upon her *sudden* recovery. And would have taken her hand, with an air of respectful tenderness; but she was resolved to begin where she left off.

She turned from me, drawing in her hand, with a repulsing and indignant aspect—I meet you once more, said she, because I cannot help it. What have you to say to me? Why am I to be thus detained against my will?

With the utmost solemnity of speech and behaviour, I urged the ceremony. I saw I had nothing else for it. I had a letter in my pocket, I said, [feeling for it, although I had not taken it from the

table where I left it in the same room] the contents of which, if attended to, would make us both happy. I had been loth to show it to her before, because I hoped to prevail upon her to be mine *sooner* than the day mentioned in it.

I felt for it in all my pockets, watching her eye meantime, which I saw glance towards the table where it lay.

I was uneasy that I could not find it—at last, directed again by her sly eye, I spied it on the table at the further end of the room.

With joy I fetched it. Be pleased to read that letter, madam; with an air of satisfied assurance.

She took it, and cast her eye over it, in such a careless way, as made it evident, that she had read it before: and then unthankfully tossed it into the window-seat before her.

I urged her to bless me to-morrow, or Friday morning: at least, that she would not render vain her uncle's journey, and kind endeavours to bring about a reconciliation among us all.

Among us all! repeated she, with an air equally disdainful and incredulous. O Lovelace, thou art surely nearly allied to the grand deceiver, in thy endeavour to suit temptations to inclinations!—But what honour, what faith, what veracity, were it possible that I could enter into a parley with thee on this subject, (which it is not) may I expect from such a man as thou hast shown thyself to be?

I was touched to the quick. A lady of your perfect character, madam, who has feigned herself sick, on purpose to avoid seeing the man who adored her, should not—

I know what thou wouldst say, interrupted she—twenty and twenty low things, that my soul would have been above being guilty of, and which I have despised myself for, have I been brought

into by the infection of thy company, and by the necessity thou hast laid me under, of appearing mean. But I thank God, destitute as I am, that I am not, however, sunk so low, as to wish to be thine.

I, madam, as the injurer, *ought* to have patience. It is for the injured to reproach. But your *uncle* is not in a plot against you, it is to be hoped. There are circumstances in the letter you have cast your eyes over—

Again she interrupted me, Why, once more I ask you, am I detained in this house?—Do not I see myself surrounded by wretches, who, though they wear the habit of my sex, may yet, as far as I know, lie in wait for my perdition?

She would be very loth, I said, that Mrs. Sinclair and her nieces should be called up to vindicate themselves, and their house.

Would but they kill me, let them come, and welcome. I will bless the hand that will strike the blow! Indeed I will.

'Tis idle, very idle to talk of dying. Mere young lady talk, when controlled by those they hate. But let me beseech you, dearest creature——

Beseech me nothing. Let me not be detained thus against my will!—Unhappy creature that I am, said she, in a kind of phrensy, wringing her hands at the same time, and turning from me, her eyes lifted up! 'Thy curse, O my cruel father, seems to be now in the height of its operation!—My weakened mind is full of forebodings, that I am in the way of being a lost creature as to both worlds! Blessed, blessed God, said she, falling on her knees, save me, O save me, from myself and from this man!'

I sunk down on my knees by her, excessively

affected—O that I could recal yesterday! Forgive me, my dearest creature, forgive what is past, as it cannot now but by one way be retrieved. Forgive me only on this condition—that my future faith and honour—

She interrupted me, rising—If you mean to beg of me never to seek to avenge myself by law, or by an appeal to my relations, to my cousin Morden in particular, when he comes to England——

D—n the law, rising also, [she started] and all those to whom you talk of appealing!—I defy both the one and the other—all I beg, is YOUR forgiveness; and that you will, on my unfeigned contrition, re-establish me in your favour.

O no, no, no! lifting up her clasped hands, I never, never *will*, never, never *can* forgive you!—And it is a punishment worse than death to me, that I am obliged to meet you, or to see you.

This is the last time, my dearest life, that you will ever see me in this posture, on this occasion: and again I kneeled to her. Let me hope, that you will be mine next Thursday, your uncle's birth-day, if not before. Would to heaven I had never been a villain! Your indignation is not, cannot be greater, than my remorse—and I took hold of her gown, for she was going from me.

Be remorse thy portion!—For thine own sake, be remorse thy portion!—I never, never will forgive thee!—I never, never will be thine!—Let me retire!—Why kneelest thou to the wretch whom thou hast so vilely humbled?

Say but, dearest creature, you will *consider*—say but you will take time to reflect upon what the honour of both our families requires of you. I will not rise. I will not permit you to withdraw [still holding her gown] till you tell me you will *consider*.—Take this letter. Weigh well *your* situation,

and mine. Say you will withdraw to *consider*; and then I will not presume to withhold you.

Compulsion shall do nothing with me. Though a slave, a prisoner, in circumstance, I am no slave in my will!—Nothing will I promise thee!—Withheld, compelled—nothing will I promise thee.

Noble creature! But not implacable, I hope!—Promise me but to return in an hour!

Nothing will I promise thee!

Say but you will see me again this evening!

O that I could say—that it were in my *power* to say—I never will see thee more!—Would to heaven I never were to see thee more!

Passionate beauty! still holding her—

I speak, though with vehemence, the deliberate wish of my heart.—O that I could avoid *looking down* upon thee, mean groveller and abject as insulting—Let me withdraw! My soul is in tumults! Let me withdraw!

I quitted my hold to clasp my hands together—Withdraw, O sovereign of my fate!—Withdraw, if you *will* withdraw! My destiny is in your power! —It depends upon your breath!—Your scorn but augments my love!—your resentment is but too well founded!—But, dearest creature, return, return, with a resolution to bless with pardon and peace your faithful adorer.

She flew from me. The angel, as soon as she found her wings, flew from me. I, the reptile kneeler, the despicable slave, no more the proud victor, arose; and retiring, tried to comfort myself, that circumstanced as she is, destitute of friends and fortune; her uncle moreover, who is to reconcile all so soon, (as I thank my stars she still believes) expected—

O that she would forgive me!—Would she but generously forgive me, ard receive my vows at the

altar, at the *instant* of her forgiving me, that I might not have time to relapse into my old prejudices!—By my soul, Belford, this dear girl gives the lie to all our rakish maxims. There must be something more than a *name* in virtue!—I now see that there is! — *Once subdued, always subdued*— 'Tis an egregious falsehood! — But oh, Jack, she never *was* subdued. What have I obtained, but an increase of shame and confusion!—While her glory has been established by her sufferings!

This one merit is, however, left me, that I have laid all her sex under obligation to me, by putting this noble creature to trials, which, so gloriously supported, have done honour to them all.

However—but no more will I add—what a force have evil habits!—I will take an airing, and try to fly from myself.—Do not thou upbraid me on my weak fits—on my contradictory purposes—on my irresolution—and all will be well.

LETTER VII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Wednesday night.

A MAN is just now arrived from M. Hall, who tells me, that my lord is in a very dangerous way. The gout in his stomach to an extreme degree, occasioned by drinking a great quantity of lemonade.

A man of 10,000*l.* a year to prefer his appetite to his health!—He deserves to die!—But we have all of us our inordinate passions to gratify: and they generally bring their punishment along with them.—So witnesses the nephew, as well as the uncle.

The fellow was sent upon other business; but

stretched his orders a little to make his court to a successor.

I am glad I was not at M. Hall at the time my lord took the grateful dose. [It was certainly grateful to *him* at the time] There are people in the world, who would have had the wickedness to say, that I had persuaded him to drink it.

The man says, that his lordship was so bad when he came away, that the family began to talk of sending for me, in post haste. As I know the old peer has a good deal of cash by him, of which he seldom keeps account, it behoves me to go down as soon as I can. But what shall I do with this dear creature the while? To-morrow over, I shall, perhaps, be able to answer my own question. I am afraid she will make me desperate.

For here have I sent to implore her company, and am denied with scorn.

* * *

I HAVE been so happy as to receive, this moment, a third letter from my dear correspondent Miss Howe. A little severe devil!—It would have broken the heart of my beloved, had it fallen into her hands. I will inclose a copy of it. Read it here.

Tuesday, June 20.

MY DEAREST MISS HARLOWE,

AGAIN I venture to write to you (almost against inclination); and that by your former conveyance, little as I like it.

I know not how it is with you. It may be bad; and then it would be hard to upbraid you, for a silence you may not be able to help. But if not, what shall I say severe enough, that you have not answered either of my last letters? The first *, of which [and I think it imported you too much to be

* See Vol. V. p. 31.

silent upon it] you owned the receipt of. The other, which was delivered into your own hands *, was so pressing for the favour of a line from you, that I am amazed I could not be obliged.—And still *more*, that I have not heard from you since.

The fellow made so strange a story of the condition he saw you in, and of your speech to him, that I know not what to conclude from it: only, that he is a simple, blundering, and yet conceited fellow, who, aiming at description, and the rustic wonderful, gives an air of bumkinly romance to all he tells. That this is his character, you will believe, when you are informed, that he described you in grief excessive †, yet so improved in your person and features, and so *rosy*, that was his word, in your face, and so flush-coloured, and so plump in your arms, that one would conclude you were labouring under the operation of some malignant poison; and so much the rather, as he was introduced to you, when you were upon a couch, from which you offered not to rise, or sit up.

Upon my word, Miss Harlowe, I am greatly distressed upon your account; for I must be so free as to say, that, in your ready return with your deceiver, you have not at all answered my expectations, nor acted up to your own character; for Mrs. Townsend tells me from the women at Hampstead, how cheerfully you put yourself into his hands again: yet, at the time it was impossible you should be married!—

Lord, my dear, what pity it is, that you took so much pains to get from the man!—But you know best!—Sometimes I think it could not be *you* to whom the rustic delivered my letter. But it must too: yet, it is strange I could not have one line

* Vol. V. p. 267. † Ibid. p. 261—265.

by him:—not one!—And you so soon well enough to go with the wretch back again!

I am not sure, that the letter I am now writing will come to your hands: so shall not say half that I have upon my mind to say. But if you think it *worth your while* to write to me, pray let me know, what fine ladies, his relations, those were, who visited you at Hampstead, and carried you back again so joyfully, to a place that I had so fully warned you—but I will say no more: at least till I *know* more: for I can do nothing but wonder and stand amazed.

Notwithstanding all the man's baseness, 'tis plain, there was more than a lurking love—Good heaven!—But I have done!—Yet I know not how to have done neither—yet I must—I *will*.

Only account to me, my dear, for what I cannot at all account for: and inform me, whether you are really married, or not.—And then I shall know, whether there *must*, or must *not*, be a period shorter than that of one of our lives, to a friendship which has hitherto been the pride and boast of

Your
ANNA HOWE.

Dorcas tells me, that she has just now had a *searching* conversation, as she calls it, with her lady. She is willing, she tells the wench, still to place a confidence in her. Dorcas hopes she has re-assured her; but wishes me not to depend upon it. Yet Captain Tomlinson's letter must assuredly weigh with her. I sent it in just now by Dorcas, desiring her to reperuse it. And it was not returned me, as I feared it would be. And that's a good sign, I think.

I say, I *think*, and I *think*, for this charming creature, entangled as I am in my own inventions, puzzles *me* ten thousand times more than I *her*.

LETTER VIII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Thursday noon, June 22.

LET me perish if I know what to make either of myself or of this surprising creature — now calm, now tempestuous—but I know thou lovest not anticipation any more than I.

At my repeated request, she met me at six this morning. She was ready dressed; for she has not had her clothes off ever since she declared, that they never more should be off in this house. And charmingly she looked, with all the disadvantages of a three hours violent stomach ache, (for Dorcas told me that she had been really ill) no rest, and eyes red and swelled with weeping. Strange to me that those charming fountains have not been long ago exhausted! But she is a woman. And I believe anatomists allow, *that women have more watry heads than men.*

Well, my dearest creature, I hope you have now thoroughly considered of the contents of Captain Tomlinson's letter. But as we are thus early met, let me beseech you to make this my happy day.

She looked not favourably upon me. A cloud hung upon her brow at her entrance: but as she was going to answer me, a still greater solemnity took possession of her charming features.

Your air, and your countenance, my beloved creature, are not propitious to me. Let me beg of you, before you speak, to forbear all further recriminations: for already I have such a sense of my vileness to you, that I know not how to bear the reproaches of my own mind.

I have been endeavouring, said she, *since I am*

not permitted to avoid you, to obtain a composure which I never more expected to see you in. How long I may enjoy it, I cannot tell. But I hope I shall be enabled to speak to you without that vehemence which I expressed yesterday, and could not help it *.

After a pause (for I was all attention) thus she proceeded:

It is easy for me, Mr. Lovelace, to see, that further violences are intended me, if I comply not with your purposes, whatever they are. I will suppose them to be what you solemnly profess they are. But I have told you, as solemnly, my mind, that I never *will,* that I never *can* be yours; nor, if so, any man's upon earth. All vengeance, nevertheless, for the wrongs you have done me, I disclaim. I want but to slide into some obscure corner, to hide myself from you, and from every one who once loved me. The desire lately so near my heart, of a reconciliation with my friends, is much abated. They shall not receive me *now* if they would. Sunk in mine own eyes, I now think myself unworthy of their favour. In the anguish of my soul, therefore, I conjure you, Lovelace, [tears in her eyes] to leave me to my fate. In doing so, you will give me a pleasure, the highest I now can know.

Whither, my dearest life——

No matter whither. I will leave to Providence,

* The lady in her minutes says, 'I fear Dorcas is a false one. May I not be able to prevail upon him to leave me at my liberty? Better to try, than to trust to her. If I cannot prevail, but must meet him and my uncle, I hope I shall have fortitude enough to renounce him then. But I would fain avoid qualifying with the wretch, or to give him an expectation which I intend not to answer. If I am mistress of my own resolutions, my uncle himself shall not prevail with me to bind my soul in covenant with so vile a man.'

when I am out of this house, the direction of my future steps. I am sensible enough of my destitute condition. I know, that I have not now a friend in the world. Even Miss Howe has given me up—or you are—but I would fain keep my temper!—By your means I have lost them all—and you have been a barbarous enemy to me. You know you have.

She paused.

I could not speak.

The evils I have suffered, proceeded she, [turning from me] however irreparable, are but *temporary* evils. Leave me to my hopes of being enabled to obtain the Divine forgiveness, for the offence I have been drawn in to give to my parents, and to virtue; that so I may avoid the evils that are *more than temporary*. This is now all I have to wish for. And what is it that I demand, that I have not a right to, and from which it is an illegal violence to withhold me?

It was impossible for me, I told her plainly, to comply. I besought her to give me her hand as this very day. I could not live without her. I communicated to her my lord's illness, as a reason why I wished not to stay for her uncle's anniversary. I besought her to bless me with her consent; and, after the ceremony was passed, to accompany me down to Berks. And thus, my dearest life, said I, will you be freed from a house, to which you have conceived so great an antipathy.

This, thou wilt own, was a princely offer. And I was resolved to be as good as my word. I thought I had killed my conscience, as I told thee, Belford, some time ago. But conscience, I find, though it may be temporarily stifled, cannot die; and when it dare not speak aloud, will whisper. And at this instant I thought I felt the revived varletess (on but

a slight retrograde motion) writhing round my pericardium like a serpent; and (in the action of a dying one collecting all its force into its head) fix its plaguy fangs into my heart.

She hesitated, and looked down, as if irresolute. And this set my heart up at my mouth. And, believe me, I had instantly popt in upon me, in imagination, an old spectacled parson, with a white surplice thrown over a black habit, [a fit emblem of the halcyon office, which, under a benign appearance, often introdues a life of storms and tempests] whining and snuffling through his nose the irrevocable ceremony.

I hope now, my dear life, said I, snatching her hand, and pressing it to my lips, that your silence bodes me good. Let me, my beloved creature, have but your *tacit* consent; and this moment I will step out and engage a minister—and then I promised how much my whole future life should be devoted to her commands, and that I would make her the best and tenderest of husbands.

At last, turning to me, I have told you my mind, Mr. Lovelace, said she. Think you, that I could thus solemnly—there she stopt—I am too much in your power, proceeded she; your prisoner, rather than a person free to choose for myself, or to say what I will *do* or *be*—but, as a testimony that you mean me well, let me instantly quit this house; and I will then give you such an answer in writing, as best befits my unhappy circumstances.

And imaginest thou, fairest, thought I, that this will go down with a Lovelace? Thou oughtest to have known that free-livers, like ministers of state, never part with a power put into their hands, without an equivalent of twice the value.

I pleaded, that if we joined hands *this morning* (if not, *to-morrow*; if not, on *Thursday*, her uncle's

birth-day, and in his presence); and afterwards, as I had proposed, set out for Berks; we should, of course, quit this house; and, on our return to town, should have in readiness the house I was in treaty for.

She answered me not, but with tears and sighs; *fond of believing what I hoped,* I imputed her silence to the modesty of her sex. The dear creature (thought I) solemnly as she began with me, is ruminating, in a sweet suspense, how to put into fit words the gentle purposes of her condescending heart. But, looking in her averted face, with a soothing gentleness, I plainly perceived, that it was resentment, and not bashfulness, that was struggling in her bosom *.

At last, she broke silence—I have no patience, said she, to find myself a slave, a prisoner, in a vile house—tell me, sir, in so many words tell me, whether it be, or be not, your intention to permit me to quit it?—To permit me the freedom which is my birthright as an English subject.

Will not the consequence of your departure hence be that I shall lose you for ever, madam?—And can I bear the thoughts of that?

She flung from me—My soul disdains to hold parley with thee, were her violent words—but I threw myself at her feet, and took hold of her reluctant hand, and began to imprecate, to vow, to promise—but thus the passionate beauty, interrupting me, went on:

I am sick of thee, man!—One continued string of vows, oaths, and protestations, varied only by

* The lady, in her minutes, owns the difficulty she lay under to keep her temper in this conference. 'But when I found,' says she, 'that all my entreaties were ineffectual, and that he was resolved to detain me, I could no longer withhold my impatience.'

time and place, fills thy mouth!—Why detainest thou me! My heart rises against thee, O thou *cruel implement of my brother's causeless vengeance*—all I beg of thee is, that thou wilt remit me the *future* part of my father's dreadful curse! The *temporary* part, base and ungrateful as thou art! thou hast completed!

I was speechless!—Well I might!—Her *brother's* implement!—*James Harlowe's* implement! Zounds, Jack! what words were these!

I let go her struggling hand. She took two or three turns across the room, her whole haughty soul in her air. Then approaching me, but in silence, turning from me, and again to me, in a milder voice—I see thy confusion, Lovelace. Or is it thy remorse? —I have but one request to make thee—the request so often repeated — that thou wilt this moment permit me to quit this house. Adieu, then, let me say, for *ever* adieu! And mayst thou enjoy that happiness in this world, which thou hast robbed me of; as thou hast of every friend I have in it.

And saying this, away she flung, leaving me in a confusion so great, that I knew not what to think, say, or do.

But Dorcas soon roused me—Do you know, sir, running in hastily, that my lady is gone down stairs!

No sure!—And down I flew, and found her once more at the street door, contending with Polly Horton to get out.

She rushed by me into the fore-parlour, and flew to the window, and attempted once more to throw up the sash—Good people! good people! cried she.

I caught her in my arms, and lifted her from the window. But being afraid of hurting the charming creature, (charming in her very rage) she slid through my arms on the floor. Let me die here!

Let me die here! were her words; remaining jointless and immovable, till Sally and Mrs. Sinclair hurried in.

She was visibly terrified at the sight of the old wretch; while I (sincerely affected) appealed, Bear witness, Mrs. Sinclair!—Bear witness, Miss Martin!—Miss Horton! Every one bear witness, that I offer not violence to this beloved creature!

She shen found her feet—O house, [looking towards the windows, and all round her, O house] contrived on purpose for my ruin! said she—but let not that woman come into my presence—nor that Miss Horton neither, who would not have dared to control me, had she not been a base one!

Hoh, sir, hoh, madam! vociferated the old dragon, her arms kemboed, and flourishing with one foot to the extent of her petticoats—what ado's here about nothing!—I never knew such work in my life, between a chicken of a gentleman, and a tiger of a lady!—

She was visibly affrighted: and up stairs she hastened. A bad woman is certainly, Jack, more terrible to her own sex, than even a bad man.

I followed her up. She rushed by her own apartment into the dining-room: no terror can make her forget her punctilio.

To recite what passed there of invective, exclamations, threatenings, even of her own life, on one side; of expostulations, supplications, and sometimes menaces, on the other; would be too affecting; and, after my particularity in like scenes, these things may as well be imagined as expressed.

I will therefore only mention, that, at length, I extorted a concession from her. She had reason *

* The lady mentions, in her memorandum-book, that she had no other way, as she apprehended, to save herself from instant dishonour, but by making this concession. Her only

to think it would have been worse for her on the spot, if she had not made it. It was, *That she would endeavour to make herself easy, till she saw what next Thursday, her uncle's birth-day, would produce.* But O that it were not a sin, she passionately exclaimed on making this poor concession, to put an end to her own life, rather than yield to give me but *that* assurance!

This however shows me, that she is aware that the reluctantly-given assurance may be fairly construed into a matrimonial expectation on my side. And if she will *now*, even *now*, look forward, I think, from my heart, that I will put on her livery, and wear it for life.

What a situation am I in, with all my cursed inventions! I am puzzled, confounded, and ashamed of myself upon the whole. To take such pains to be a villain!—but (for the *fiftieth* time) let me ask thee, who would have thought, that there had been such a woman in the world?—Nevertheless, she had best take care, that she carries not her obstinacy much further. She knows not what revenge for slighted love will make me do.

The busy scenes I have just passed through, have given emotions to my heart, which will not be quieted one while. My heart, I see, (on re-perusing what I have written) has communicated its tremors to my fingers; and in some places the characters are so indistinct and unformed, that thou'lt hardly be able to make them out. But if one *half* of them

hope, now, she says, if she cannot escape by Dorcas's connivance (whom, nevertheless, she suspects) is, to find a way to engage the protection of her uncle, and even of the civil magistrate, on Thursday next, if necessary. 'He shall see, says she, tame and timid as he has thought me, what I dare to do, to avoid so hated a compulsion, and a man capable of a baseness so premeditately vile and inhuman.'

only are intelligible, that will be enough to expose me to thy contempt, for the wretched hand I have made of my plots and contrivances — but surely, Jack, I have gained some ground by this promise.

And now, one word to the assurances thou sendest me, that thou hast not betrayed my secrets in relation to this charming creature. Thou mightest have spared them, Belford. My suspicions held no longer than while I wrote about them *. For well I knew, when I allowed myself time to think, that thou hadst no *principles*, no *virtue*, to be misled by. A great deal of strong envy, and a little of weak pity, I knew to be thy motives. Thou couldest not provoke my anger, and my compassion thou ever hadst; and art now more especially entitled to it; because thou art a *pitiful* fellow.

All thy new expostulations in my beloved's behalf, I will answer when I see thee.

LETTER IX.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Thursday night.

CONFOUNDEDLY out of humour with this perverse woman!—Nor wilt thou blame me, if thou art my friend. She regards the concession she made, as a concession extorted from her. And we are but just where we were before she made it.

With great difficulty I prevailed upon her to favour me with her company for one half hour this evening. The necessity I was under to go down to M. Hall, was the subject I wanted to talk upon.

* See Vol. V. p. 357.

I told her, that as she had been so good as to promise, that she would endeavour to make herself easy till she saw the Thursday in next week over, I hoped that she would not scruple to oblige me with her word, that I should find her here at my return from M. Hall.

Indeed she would make me no such promise. Nothing of *this house* was mentioned to me, said she: you know it was not. And do you think that I would have given *my consent to my imprisonment in it?*

I was plaguily nettled, and disappointed too. If I go not down to M. Hall, madam, you'll have no scruple to stay here, I suppose, till Thursday is over?

If I cannot help myself I must—but I insist upon being permitted to go out of this house, whether *you* leave it or not.

Well, madam, then I will comply with your commands. And I will go out this very evening in quest of lodgings that you shall have no objection to.

I will have no lodgings of *your* providing, sir,—I will go to Mrs. Moore's, at Hampstead.

Mrs. Moore's, madam!—I have no objection to Mrs. Moore's—But will you give me your promise, to admit me *there* to your presence?

As I do *here*—when I cannot help it.

Very well, madam—will you be so good, as to let me know, what you intended by your promise to *make yourself easy*—

To *endeavour*, sir, to make myself easy—were the words—

—*Till you saw what next Thursday would produce?*

Ask me no questions that may ensnare me. I am too sincere for the company I am in.

Let me ask you, madam, what meant you, when

you said, 'that were it not a sin, you would die before you gave me that assurance?'

She was indignantly silent.

You thought, madam, you had given me room to hope your pardon by it?

When I think I ought to answer you with patience, I will speak.

Do you think yourself in my power, madam?

If I were not—and there she stopt—

Dearest creature, speak out—I beseech you, dearest creature, speak out—

She was silent; her charming face all in a glow.

Have you, madam, any reliance upon my honour?

Still silent.

You hate me, madam! You despise me more than you do the most odious of God's creatures!

You ought to despise *me*, if I did not.

You say, madam, you are in a *bad* house. You have *no reliance* upon my honour—you believe you *cannot avoid me*—

She arose. I beseech you, let me withdraw.

I snatched her hand, rising, and pressed it first to my lips, and then to my heart in wild disorder. She might have felt the bounding mischief ready to burst its bars—You *shall* go—to your own apartment, if you please—but by the great God of heaven, I will accompany you thither.

She trembled—Pray, pray, Mr. Lovelace, don't terrify me so!

Be seated, madam! I beseech you, be seated!—

I will sit down—

Do then—all my soul in my eyes, and my heart's blood throbbing at my fingers' ends.

I will—I will—you hurt me—pray Mr. Lovelace, don't—don't frighten me so—and down she sat trembling; my hand still grasping her's.

I hung over her throbbing bosom, and putting my other arm round her waist—And you say, you hate me, madam—and you say, you despise me—and you say, you promised me nothing——

Yes, yes, I *did* promise you—let me not be held down thus—you see I sat down when you bid me—why [struggling] need you hold me down thus?—I did promise *to endeavour to be easy till Thursday was over!* But you won't let me!— How can I be easy?—Pray, let me not be thus terrified.

And what, madam, *meant* you by your promise? Did you mean any thing in my favour?—You designed that I should, at the time, *think* you did. Did you mean any thing in my favour, madam?—Did you intend, that I should *think* you did?

Let go my hand, sir—take away your arm from about me [struggling, yet trembling]—*Why do you gaze upon me so?*

Answer me, madam—did you mean any thing in my favour by your promise?

Let me not be thus constrained to answer.

Then pausing; and gaining more spirit, Let me go, said she: I am but a woman—but a *weak* woman—but my life is in my own power, though my person is not—I will not be thus constrained.

You shall not, madam, quitting her hand, bowing; but my heart at my mouth, and hoping further provocation.

She arose, and was hurrying away.

I pursue you not, madam—I will try your generosity. Stop—return—this moment stop, return, if, madam, you would not make me desperate.

She stopt at the door; burst into tears—O Lovelace!—How, how have I deserved—

Be *pleased,* dearest angel, to return.

She came back—but with declared reluctance; and imputing her compliance to terror.

Terror, Jack, as I have heretofore found out, though I have so little benefited by the discovery, must be my resort, if she make it necessary—nothing else will do with the inflexible charmer.

She seated herself over against me; extremely discomposed. But indignation had a visible predominance in her features.

I was going towards her with a countenance intendedly changed to love and softness: sweetest, dearest angel, were my words, in the tenderest accent: but, rising up, she insisted upon my being seated at a distance from her.

I obeyed, and begged her hand over the table, to my extended hand; to see, as I said, if in any thing she would oblige me. But nothing gentle, soft, or affectionate, would do. She refused me her hand!—Was she wise, Jack, to confirm to me, that nothing but terror would do?

Let me only know, madam, if your promise to *endeavour* to wait with patience the event of next Thursday, meant me favour?

Do you expect any voluntary favour from one to whom you give not a free choice?

Do you intend, madam, to honour me with your hand, in your uncle's presence, or do you not?

My heart and my hand shall never be separated. Why, think you, did I stand in opposition to the will of my best, my natural friends?

I know what you mean, madam—am I then as hateful to you as the vile Solmes?

Ask me not such a question, Mr. Lovelace.

I *must* be answered. Am I as hateful to you as the vile Solmes?

Why do you call Mr. Solmes vile?

Don't *you* think him so, madam?

Why should I? Did Mr. Solmes ever do vilely by me?

Dearest creature! don't distract me by hateful comparisons! And perhaps by a more hateful preference.

Don't *you*, sir, put questions to me, that you know I will answer truly, though my answer were ever so much to enrage you.

My heart, madam, my souls is all yours at present. But you *must* give me hope, that your promise, in your own construction, binds you, no *new cause* to the contrary, to be mine on Thursday. How else can I leave you?

Let me go to Hampstead; and trust to my favour.

May I trust to it?—Say, only *may* I trust to it?

How will you trust to it, if you extort an answer to this question?

Say only, dearest creature, say only, *may* I trust to your favour, if you go to Hampstead?

How dare you, sir, if I *must* speak out, expect a promise of favour from me?—What a mean creature must you think me, after your ungrateful baseness to me, were I to give you such a promise?

Then standing up, Thou hast made me, O vilest of men! [her hands clasped, and her face crimsoned over with indignation] an inmate of the vilest of houses—nevertheless, while I am in it, I shall have a heart incapable of any thing but abhorrence of *that* and of *thee*.

And round her looked the angel, and upon me, with fear in her sweet aspect of the consequence of her free declaration—But what a devil must I have been, I who love bravery in a man, had I not been more struck with admiration of her fortitude at the instant, than stimulated by revenge?

Noblest of creatures!—And do you think I can leave you, and my interest in such an excellence,

precarious? No promise!—no hope!—If you make me not desperate, may lightning blast me, if I do you not all the justice 'tis in my power to do you!

If you have any intention to oblige me, leave me at my own liberty, and let me not be detained in this abominable house. To be constrained as I have been constrained! To be stopt by your vile agents! To be brought up by force and be bruised in my own defence against such illegal violence!—I dare to die, Lovelace—and she who fears not death, is not to be intimidated into a meanness unworthy of her heart and principles!

Wonderful creature! But why, madam, did you lead me to hope for something favourable for next Thursday?—Once more, make me not desperate—with all your magnanimity, glorious creature! [I was more than half frantic, Belford] You *may*, you *may*—but do not, do not make me brutally threaten you—do not, do not, make me desperate!

My aspect, I believe, threatened still more than my words. I was rising—she arose—Mr. Lovelace, be pacified—you are even more dreadful than the Lovelace I have long dreaded—let me retire—I ask your *leave* to retire—you really frighten me—yet I give you no hope—from my heart I ab—

Say not, madam, you *abhor* me. You must, for your own sake, conceal your hatred—at least not avow it. I seized her hand.

Let me retire—let me retire, said she—in a manner out of breath.

I will only say, madam, that I refer myself to your generosity. My heart is not to be trusted at this instant. As a mark of my submission to your will, you shall, *if you please*, withdraw—but I will not go to M. Hall—live or die, my Lord M. I will not go to M. Hall—but will attend the effect of your promise. Remember, madam, you have pro-

mised *to endeavour to make yourself easy, till you see the event of next Thursday*—next Thursday, remember, your uncle comes up to see us married—*that's the event.*—You think ill of your Lovelace—do not, madam, suffer your own morals to be degraded by the *infection,* as you call it, of his example.

Away flew the charmer with this half permission—and no doubt thought that she had an escape—nor without reason.

I knew not for half an hour what to do with myself. Vexed at the heart, nevertheless, (now she was from me, and when I reflected upon her hatred of me, and her defiances) that I suffered myself to be so over-awed, checked, restrained——

And now I have written thus far (have of course recollected the whole of our conversation) I am more and more incensed against myself.

But I will go down to these women—and perhaps suffer myself to be laughed at by them.

Devil fetch them, they pretend to know their own sex. Sally was a woman well educated—Polly also—both have read—both have sense—of parentage not mean—once modest both—still they say had been modest, but for me—not entirely indelicate *now;* though too little nice for my *personal* intimacy, loth as they both are to have me think so—the old one, too, a woman of family, though thus (from bad inclination as well as at first from low circumstances) miserably sunk:—and hence they all pretend to remember what *once* they were; and vouch for the inclinations and hypocrisy of the whole sex, and wish for nothing so ardently, as that I will leave the perverse lady to their management, while I am gone to Berkshire; undertaking absolutely for her humility and passiveness on my return; and con-

tinually boasting of the many perverse creatures whom they have obliged to draw in their traces.

* * *

I AM just come from these sorceresses.

I was forced to take the mother down; for she began with her Hoh, sir! with me; and to catechise and upbraid me, with as much insolence as if I owed her money.

I made her fly the pit, at last. Strange wishes wished we against each other, at her quitting it—What were they?—I'll tell thee—she wished me married, and to be jealous of my wife; and my heir-apparent the child of another man. I was even with her with a vengeance. And yet thou wilt think that could not well be—*As how?*—As how, Jack!—Why, I wished her conscience come to life! And I know by the gripes *mine* gives me every half hour, that she would then have a cursed time of it.

Sally and Polly gave themselves high airs too. Their first favours were thrown at me, [women to boast of those favours which they were as willing to impart, first forms all the difficulty with them! as I to receive!] I was upbraided with ingratitude, *dastardize*, and all my difficulties with my angel charged upon myself, for want of following my blows; and for leaving the proud lady mistress of her own will, and nothing to *reproach herself with.* And all agreed, that the arts used against her on a certain occasion, had too high an operation for them or me to judge what her will *would have been* in the arduous trial. And then they blamed one another; as I cursed them all.

They concluded, that I should certainly marry, and be a *lost man.* And Sally, on this occasion, with an affected and malicious laugh, snapt her fin-

gers at me, and pointing two of each hand forkedly at me, bid me remember the lines I once showed her, of my favourite *Jack* Dryden, as she always familiarly calls that celebrated poet:

We women to new joys unseen may move:
There are no prints left in the paths of love.
All goods besides by public marks are known:
But those men most desire to keep, have none.

This infernal implement had the confidence further to hint, that when a wife, some other man would not find half the difficulty with my angel that I had found. Confidence indeed! But yet, I must say, that this dear creature is the only woman in the world of whom I should not be jealous. And yet, if a man gives himself up to the company of these devils, they never let him rest, till he either suspect or hate his wife.

But a word or two of other matters, if possible.

Methinks I long to know how causes go at M. Hall. I have another private intimation, that the old peer is in the greatest danger.

I must go down. Yet what to do with this lady the meanwhile! These cursed women are full of cruelty and enterprise. She will never be easy with them in my absence. They will have provocation and pretence therefore. But woe be to them, if—

Yet what will vengeance do, after an insult committed? The two nymphs will have jealous rage to goad them on. And what will withhold a jealous and already ruined woman?

To let her go elsewhere; that cannot be done. I am still resolved to be honest, if she will give me hope: if yet she will *let* me be honest. But I'll see how she'll be after the contention she will certainly have between her resentment, and the terror

she had reason for from our last conversation. So let this subject rest till the morning. And to the old peer once more.

I shall have a good deal of trouble, I reckon, though no sordid man, to be decent on the expected occasion. Then how to act (I who am no hypocrite) in the days of condolement! What farces have I to go through; and to be a principal actor in them! I'll try to think of my own latter end; a grey beard, and a graceless heir; in order to make me serious.

Thou, Belford, knowest a good deal of this sort of grimace; and canst help a gay heart to a little of the dismal. But then every feature of thy face is cut out for it. My heart may be touched, perhaps, sooner than thine; for, believe me or not, I have a very tender one. But then, no man looking in my face, be the occasion for grief ever so great, will believe *that* heart to be deeply distressed.

All is placid, easy, serene in my countenance. Sorrow cannot sit half an hour together upon it. Nay, I believe, that Lord M.'s recovery, should it happen, would not affect me above a quarter of an hour. Only the new scenery, (and the pleasure of aping an Heraclitus to the family, while I am a Democritus among my private friends) or I want nothing that the old peer can leave me. Wherefore then should grief sadden and distort such blithe, such jocund features as mine?

But as for thine, were there murder committed in the street, and thou wert but passing by, the murderer even in sight, the pursuers would quit *him*, and lay hold of *thee*: and thy very looks would hang, as well as apprehend thee.

But one word to business, Jack. Whom dealest thou with for thy blacks?—Wert thou well used?

I shall want a plaguy parcel of them. For I intend to make every soul of the family mourn—*outside*, if not in.

LETTER X.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

June 23, Friday morning.

I WENT out early this morning, on a design that I know not yet whether I shall or shall not pursue; and on my return found Simon Parsons, my lord's Berkshire bailiff, (just before arrived) waiting for me with a message in form, sent by all the family, to press me to go down, and that at my lord's particular desire; who wants to see me before he dies.

Simon has brought my lord's chariot and six [perhaps *my own* by this time] to carry me down. I have ordered it to be in readiness by four to-morrow morning. The cattle shall smoke for the delay; and by the rest they'll have in the interim, will be better able to bear it.

I am still resolved upon matrimony, if my fair perverse will accept of me. But, if she will not—why then I must give an uninterrupted hearing, not to my conscience, but to these women below.

Dorcas had acquainted her lady with Simon's arrival and errand. My beloved had desired to see him. But my coming in prevented his attendance on her, just as Dorcas was instructing him what questions he should *not* answer to, that might be asked of him.

I am to be admitted to her presence immediately, at my repeated request. Surely the acquisition in view will help me to make up all with her. She is just gone up to the dining-room.

* * *

NOTHING will do, Jack!—I can procure no favour from her, though she has obtained from me the point which she had set her heart upon.

I will give thee a brief account of what passed between us.

I first proposed instant marriage; and this in the most fervent manner: but was denied as fervently.

Would she be pleased to assure me, that she would stay here only till Tuesday morning? I would but just go down and see how my lord was to know whether he had any thing particular to say, or enjoin me, while yet he was sensible, as he was very earnest to see me—perhaps I might be up on Sunday—Concede in something!—I beseech you, madam, show me some little consideration.

Why, Mr. Lovelace, must I be determined by your motions?—Think you, that I will voluntarily give a sanction to the imprisonment of my person? Of what importance to me ought to be your stay or your return?

Give a sanction to the imprisonment of your person! Do you think, madam, that I fear the law?

I might have spared this foolish question of defiance: but my pride would not let me. I thought she threatened me, Jack.

I *don't* think you fear the law, sir.—You are too *brave* to have any regard either to moral or divine sanctions.

'Tis well, madam—But ask me any thing I can do to oblige *you*; and I *will* oblige you; though in nothing will you oblige *me*.

Then I ask you, then I request of you, to let me go to Hampstead.

I paused—and at last—By my soul you shall—this very moment I will wait upon you, and see you fixed there, if you'll promise me your hand on Thursday in presence of your uncle.

I want not *you* to see me fixed. I will promise nothing.

Take care, madam, that you don't let me see, that I can have no reliance upon your future favour.

I have been used to be threatened by you, sir— But I will accept of your company to Hampstead— I will be ready to go in a quarter of an hour—my clothes may be sent after me.

You know the condition, madam—next Thursday.

You dare not trust——

My infinite demerits tell me, that I *ought* not—nevertheless I *will* confide in your generosity—To-morrow morning, (no *new cause* arising to give reason to the contrary) as early as you please, you may go to Hampstead.

This seemed to oblige her. But yet she looked with a face of doubt.

I will go down to the women, Belford. And having no better judges at hand, will hear what they say upon my critical situation with this proud beauty, who has so insolently rejected a Lovelace kneeling at her feet, though making an earnest tender of himself for a husband, in spite of all his prejudices to the state of shackles.

LETTER XI.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

JUST come from the women.

'Have I gone so far, and am I afraid to go further?—Have I not already, as it is evident by her behaviour, sinned beyond forgiveness?—A woman's tears used to be to me but as water sprinkled

on a glowing fire, which gives it a fiercer and brighter blaze: what defence has this lady but her tears, and her eloquence? She was before taken at *no weak* advantage. She was *insensible* in her moments of trial. *Had* she been sensible, she *must* have been sensible. So they say. The methods taken with her have augmented her glory and her pride. She has now a tale to tell, that she *may* tell with honour to herself. No accomplice-inclination. She can look me into confusion, without being conscious of so much as a *thought,* which she need to be ashamed of.'

This, Jack, is the substance of the women's reasonings with me.

To which let me add, that the dear creature now sees the necessity I am in to leave her. Detecting me is in her head. My contrivances are of such a nature, that I must appear to be the most odious of men, if I am detected on this side matrimony. And yet I have promised, as thou seest, that she shall set out to Hampstead as soon as she pleases in the morning, and that without condition on her side.

Dost thou ask, What I meant by this promise?

No *new cause* arising, was the proviso on my side, thou'lt remember. But there *will be* a new cause.

Suppose Dorcas should drop the promissory note given her by her lady? Servants, especially those who cannot read or write, are the most careless people in the world of written papers. Suppose I take it up?—at a time, too, that I was determined that the dear creature should be her own mistress?—Will not this detection be a *new cause?*—A cause that will carry with it against her the appearance of ingratitude?

That she designed it a *secret to me,* argues a *fear of detection,* and indirectly a *sense of guilt.* I wanted a pretence. Can I have a better?—If I am

in a violent passion upon the detection, is not passion an universally allowed extenuator of violence? Is not every man and woman obliged to excuse that fault in another, which at times they find attended with such ungovernable effects in themselves?

The mother and sisterhood, suppose, brought to sit in judgment upon the vile corrupted—the least benefit that must accrue from the accidental discovery, if not a pretence for *perpetration*, [which, however, may be the case] an excuse for renewing my orders for her detention till my return from M. Hall [the fault her own]; and for keeping a stricter watch over her than before; with direction to send me any letters that may be written *by* her or *to* her.—And when I return, the devil's in it if I find not a way to make her choose lodgings for herself (since these are so hateful to her) that shall answer all my purposes; and yet I no more appear to direct her choice, than I did before in these.

Thou wilt curse me when thou comest to this place. I know thou wilt. But thinkest thou, that after such a series of contrivance, I will lose this inimitable woman for want of a little more? A rake's a rake, Jack!—And what rake is withheld by *principle* from the perpetration of any evil his heart is set upon, and in which he thinks he can succeed? —Besides, am I not in earnest as to marriage?—Will not the generality of the world acquit me, if I *do* marry? And what is that injury which a *church rite* will not at any time repair? Is not *the catastrophe of every story that ends in wedlock accounted happy*, be the difficulties in the progress to it ever so great?

But here, how am I engrossed by this lady, while poor Lord M. as Simon tells me, lies groaning in the most dreadful agonies!—What must he suffer!

—Heaven relieve him!—I have a too compassionate heart. And so would the dear creature have found, could I have thought that the worst of *her* sufferings is equal to the lightest of *his*. I mean as to fact; for as to that part of hers, which arises from extreme sensibility, I know nothing of that; and cannot therefore be answerable for it.

LETTER XII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Just come from my charmer. She will not suffer me to say half the obliging, the tender things, which my honest heart is ready to overflow with. A confounded situation that, when a man finds himself in humour to be eloquent and pathetic at the same time, yet cannot engage the mistress of his fate to lend an ear to his fine speeches.

I can account now, how it comes about, that lovers, when their mistresses are cruel, run into solitude, and disburthen their minds to *stocks and stones*: for am I not forced to make my complaints to *thee*?

She claimed the performance of my promise, the moment she saw me, of *permitting* her [haughtily she spoke the word] to go to Hampstead, as soon as I was gone to Berks.

Most cheerfully I renewed it.

She desired me to give orders in her hearing.

I sent for Dorcas and Will. They came.—Do you both take notice [but, perhaps, sir, I may take *you* with me] that your lady is to be obeyed in all her commands. She proposes to return to Hampstead as soon as I am gone—My dear, will you not have a servant to attend you?

I shall want no servant there.

Will you take Dorcas?

If I should want Dorcas, I can send for her.

Dorcas could not but say, she should be very proud—

Well, well, that may be at my return, if your lady permit—Shall I, my dear, call up Mrs. Sinclair, and give her orders, to the same effect, in your hearing?

I desire not to see Mrs. Sinclair; nor any that belong to her.

As you please, madam.

And then (the servants being withdrawn) I urged her again for the assurance, that she would meet me at the altar on Thursday next. But to no purpose—May she not thank herself for all that may follow?

One favour, however, I would not be denied; to be admitted to pass the evening with her.

All sweetness and obsequiousness will I be on this occasion. My whole soul shall be poured out to move her to forgive me. If she will not, and if the promissory note should fall in my way, my revenge will doubtless take total possession of me.

All the house in my interest, and every one in it not only engaging to intimidate and assist, as occasion shall offer, but staking all their experience upon my success, if it be not my own fault, what must be the consequence?

This, Jack, however, shall be her last trial; and if she behave as nobly *in* and *after* this *second* attempt [*all her senses about her*] as she has done after the *first*, she will come out an angel upon full proof, in spite of man, woman, and devil: then shall there be an end of all her sufferings. I will then renounce that vanquished devil, and reform. And if any vile machination start up, presuming to mis-

lead me, I will sooner stab it in my heart as it rises, than give way to it.

A few hours will now decide all. But whatever be the event, I shall be too busy to write again, till I get to M. Hall.

'Meantime I am in strange agitations. I must suppress them if possible, before I venture into her presence—my heart bounces my bosom from the table. I will lay down my pen, and wholly resign to its impulses.

LETTER XIII.

MR LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Friday night, or rather Sat. morn. 1 o'clock.

I THOUGHT I should not have had either time or inclination to write another line before I got to M. Hall. But have the first; must find the last; since I can neither sleep, nor do any thing but write, if I can do that. I am most *confoundedly* out of humour. The reason let it follow; if it will follow—no preparation for it from me.

I tried by gentleness and love to soften—what? —marble. A heart incapable either of love or gentleness. Her past injuries for ever in her head. Ready to receive a favour; the permission to go to Hampstead: but neither to deserve it, nor return any. So my scheme of the gentle kind was soon given over.

I then wanted to provoke her: like a coward boy, who waits for the first blow before he can persuade himself to fight, I half challenged her to challenge or defy me: she seemed aware of her danger: and would not directly brave my resentment: but kept such a middle course, that I neither

could find a pretence to offend, nor reason to hope: yet she believed my tale, that her uncle would come to Kentish Town, and seemed not to apprehend that Tomlinson was an impostor.

She was very uneasy, upon the whole, in my company: wanted often to break from me: yet so held me to my promise of permitting her to go to Hampstead, that I knew not how to get off it; although it was impossible, in my precarious situation with her, to think of performing it.

In this situation; the women ready to assist; and, if I proceeded not, as ready to ridicule me; what had I left me, but to pursue the concerted scheme, and to seek a pretence to quarrel with her, in order to revoke my promised permission, and to convince her that I would not be upbraided as the most brutal of ravishers for nothing?

I had agreed with the women, that if I could not find a pretence in her presence to begin my operations, the note should lie in my way, and I was to pick it up, soon after her retiring from me. But I began to doubt at near ten o'clock (so earnest was she to leave me, suspecting my over-warm behaviour to her, and eager grasping of her hand two or three times, with eye-strings, as I felt, on the strain, while her eyes showed uneasiness and apprehension) that if she actually retired for the night, it might be a chance whether it would be easy to come at her again. Loth, therefore, to run such a risk, I stept out a little after ten, with intent to alter the preconcerted disposition a little; saying I would attend her again instantly. But as I returned I met her at the door, intending to withdraw for the night. I could not persuade her to go back: nor had I presence of mind (so full of complaisance as I was to her just before) to stay her by force: so she slid through my hands into

her own apartment. I had nothing to do, therefore, but to let my former concert take place.

I should have premised (but care not for order of time, connection, or any thing else) that, between eight and nine in the evening, another servant of Lord M. on horseback came, to desire me to carry down with me Dr. S. the old peer having been once (*in extremis*, as they judge he is now) relieved and reprieved by him. I sent and engaged the doctor to accompany me down: and am to call upon him by four this morning: or the devil should have both my lord and the doctor, if I'd stir till I got all made up.

Poke thy d—n'd nose forward into the event, if thou wilt—curse me if thou shalt have it till its proper time and place. And too soon then.

She had hardly got into her chamber, but I found a little paper, as I was going into mine, which I took up; and opening it (for it was carefully pinned in another paper) what should it be but a promissory note, given as a bribe, with a further promise of a diamond ring, to induce Dorcas to favour her mistress's escape!

How my temper changed in a moment!—Ring, ring, ring, ring, I my bell, with violence enough to break the string, and as if the house were on fire.

Every devil frighted into active life: the whole house in an uproar: up runs Will.—Sir—Sir—Sir!—Eyes goggling, mouth distended—Bid the d—n'd toad Dorcas come hither, (as I stood at the stair head) in a horrible rage, and out of breath, cried I.

In sight came the trembling devil—but standing aloof, from the report made her by Will of the passion I was in, as well as from what she had heard.

Flash came out my sword immediately; for I had it ready on—Cursed, confounded, villanous, bribery and corruption—

Up runs she to her lady's door, screaming out for safety and protection.

Good your honour, interposed Will, for God's sake!—O lord, O lord!—receiving a good cuff.—

Take that, varlet, for saving the ungrateful *wretch* from my vengeance.—

Up ran two or three of the sisterhood, What's the matter! What's the matter!

The matter! (for still my beloved opened not the door; on the contrary, drew another bolt) This *abominable* Dorcas!—(Call her aunt up!—Let her see what a traitress she has placed about me.—And let her bring the toad to answer for herself)—has taken a bribe, a provision for life, to betray her trust; by that means to perpetuate a quarrel between a man and his wife, and frustrate for ever all hopes of reconciliation between us!

Let me perish, Belford, if I have patience to proceed with the farce!

* * *

If I must resume, I must——

Up came the aunt puffing and blowing—As she hoped for mercy, *she* was not privy to it! She never knew such a plotting perverse lady in her life!—Well might servants be at the pass they were, when such ladies as Mrs. Lovelace made no conscience of corrupting them. For *her* part she desired no mercy for the wretch; no niece of hers, if she were not faithful to her trust!—But what was the proof!——

She was shown the paper——

But too evident!—Cursed, cursed toad, devil, jade, passed from each mouth:—and the vileness of the corrupted, and the unworthiness of the *corruptress*, were inveighed against.

Up we all went, passing the lady's door into the dining-room, to proceed to trial.——

Stamp, stamp, stamp up, each on her heels; rave, rave, rave, every tongue——

Bring up the creature before us all this instant!—

And would she have got out of the house, say you?

These the noises and the speeches, as we clattered by the door of the fair briberess.

Up was brought Dorcas (whimpering) between two, both bawling out—You must go—you shall go—'tis fit you should answer for yourself—you are a discredit to all worthy servants—as they pulled and pushed her up stairs.—She whining, I cannot see his honour—I cannot look so good and so generous a gentleman in the face—O how shall I bear my aunt's ravings?

Come up, and be d—n'd—bring her forward, her imperial judge—what a plague, it is the *detection*, not the *crime*, that confounds you. You could be quiet enough for days together, as I see by the date, under the villany. Tell me, ungrateful devil, tell me who made the first advances?

Ay, disgrace to my family and blood, cried the old one—Tell his honour—tell the truth!—Who made the first advances?——

Ay, cursed creature, cried Sally, who made the first advances?

I have betrayed one trust already!—O let me not betray another!—My lady is a good lady!—O let not *her* suffer!——

Tell all you know. Tell all the truth, Dorcas cried Polly Horton.—His honour loves his lady too well, to make her suffer *much*: little as she requites his love!——

Every body sees that, cried Sally—too well, indeed, *for* his honour, I was going to say.

Till now, I thought she deserved my love—but to bribe a servant thus, who she supposed had o

ders to watch her steps, for fear of another elopement; and to impute that precaution to me as a crime!—Yet I must love her—ladies, forgive my weakness!——

Curse upon my grimaces!—If I have patience to repeat them!—But thou shalt have it all—thou canst not despise me more than I despise myself!

* * *

But suppose, sir, said Sally, you have my lady and the wench face to face! You see she cares not to confess.

O my *carelessness!* cried Dorcas—Don't let my poor lady suffer!—Indeed, if you all knew what I know, you would say her ladyship has been cruelly treated—

See, see, see, see!—repeatedly, every one at once—only sorry for the *detection,* as your honour said—not for the *fault.*

Cursed creature, and devilish creature, from every mouth.

Your lady *won't,* she *dare* not come out to save you, cried Sally; though it is more his honour's mercy, than your desert, if he does not cut your vile throat this instant.

Say, repeated Polly, was it your lady that made the first advances, or was it you, you creature——

If the lady has so much honour, bawled the mother, excuse me, *so*—excuse me, sir, [confound the old wretch! she had like to have said *son!*]—If the lady has so much honour, as we have supposed, she will appear to vindicate a poor servant, misled, as she has been, by such large promises!—But I hope, sir, you will do them *both* justice: I *hope* you will!—Good lack!—Good lack! clapping her hands together, to grant her every thing she could ask—to indulge her in her unworthy hatred to my poor innocent house!—To let her go

to Hampstead, though your honour told us, you could get no condescension from her; no, not the least—O sir—O sir—I hope—I hope—if your lady will not come out—I hope you will find a way to hear this cause in her presence. I value not my doors on such an occasion as this. Justice I ever loved. I desire you will come at the bottom of it in *clearance* to me. I'll be sworn I had no privity in this black corruption.

Just then, we heard the lady's door unbar, unlock, unbolt——

Now, sir!

Now, Mr. Lovelace!

Now, sir! from every encouraging mouth!——

But, O Jack! Jack! Jack! I can write no more!

* * *

If you must have it all, you must!

Now, Belford, see us all sitting in judgment, resolved to punish the fair briberess—I, and the mother, the hitherto *dreaded* mother, the nieces Sally, Polly, the traitress Dorcas, and Mabell, a guard, as it were, over Dorcas, that she might not run away, and hide herself: all pre-determined, and of *necessity* pre-determined, from the journey I was going to take, and my precarious situation with her—and hear her *unbolt, unlock, unbar* the door; then, as it proved afterwards, put the key into the lock on the outside, lock the door, and put it in her pocket—Will, I knew, below, who would give me notice, if, while we were all above, she should mistake her way, and go down stairs, instead of coming into the dining-room: the street doors also doubly secured, and every shutter to the windows round the house fastened, that no noise or screaming should be heard [such was the brutal preparation!]—And then *hear* her step towards us, and instantly *see* her enter among us, confiding in her

own innocence; and with a majesty in her person and manner, that is *natural* to her; but which then shone out in all its glory!—Every tongue silent, every eye awed, every heart quaking, mine, in a particular manner, sunk throbless, and twice below its usual region, to once at my throat:—a shameful recreant!—She silent too, looking round her, first on me; then on the mother, as no longer fearing her; then on Sally, Polly, and the culprit Dorcas! —Such the glorious power of innocence exerted at that awful moment!

She would have spoken, but could not, looking down my guilt into confusion. A mouse might have been heard passing over the floor: her own light feet and rustling silks could not have prevented it; for she seemed to tread air, and to be all soul. She passed backwards and forwards, now towards me, now towards the door several times, before speech could get the better of indignation; and at last, after twice or thrice hemming to recover her articulate voice—'O thou contemptible and abandoned Lovelace! thinkest thou that I see not through this poor villanous plot of thine, and of these thy wicked accomplices?

'Thou, woman, [looking at the mother] once my terror! always my dislike; but now my detestation! shouldst once more (for thine perhaps was the preparation) have provided for me intoxicating potions to rob me of my senses——

'And then, thou wretch, [*turning to me*] mightest more securely have depended upon such a low contrivance as this!

'And ye, vile women, who perhaps have been the ruin, body and soul, of hundreds of innocents, (you show me *how*, in full assembly) know, that I am not married—ruined as I am, by your help, I bless God, I am *not* married to this miscreant—

and I have friends that will demand my honour at your hands!—And to whose authority I will apply; for none has this man over me. Look to it then, what further insults you offer me, or incite him to offer me. I am a person, though thus vilely betrayed, of rank and fortune. I never will be his; and, to your utter ruin, will find friends to pursue you: and now I have this full proof of your detestable wickedness, and have heard your base incitements, will have no mercy upon you!'

They could not laugh at the poor figure I made. Lord! how every devil, conscience-shaken, trembled!—

What a dejection must ever fall to the lot of guilt, were it given to innocence always thus to exert itself!—

'And as for thee, thou vile Dorcas; thou *double* deceiver—whining out thy pretended love for me! —Begone, wretch!—Nobody will hurt thee!—Begone, I say!—Thou hast too well acted thy part to be blamed by *any* here but myself—thou art safe: thy guilt is thy security in such a house as this!—Thy shameful, thy poor part, thou hast as well acted, as the low farce could give thee to act!—as well as they each of them (thy superiors, though not thy betters) thou seest can act theirs.—Steal away into darkness: no inquiry after this will be made, whose the first advances, thine or mine.'

And, as I hope to live, the wench, confoundedly frightened, slunk away; so did her sentinel Mabell; though I, endeavouring to rally, cried out for Dorcas to stay—but I believe the devil could not have stopt her, when an angel bid her begone.

Madam, said I, let me tell you; and was advancing towards her with a fierce aspect, most cursedly vexed, and ashamed too——

But she turned to me; 'Stop where thou art, O

vilest and most abandoned of men!—Stop where thou art!—Nor, with that determined face, offer to touch me, if thou wouldst not that I should be a corpse at thy feet!' •

To my astonishment, she held forth a penknife in her hand, the point to her own bosom, grasping resolutely the whole handle, so that there was no offering to take it from her.

'I offer not mischief to any body but myself. You, sir, and ye women, are safe from every violence of mine. The LAW shall be all my resource: the LAW,' and she spoke the word with emphasis, that to such people carries natural terror with it, and now struck a panic into them.

No wonder, since those who will damn themselves to procure ease and plenty in this world, will tremble at every thing that seems to threaten their methods of obtaining that ease and plenty.——

'The LAW only shall be my refuge!'——

The infamous mother whispered me, that it were better to *make terms* with this *strange* lady, and let her go.

Sally, notwithstanding all her impudent bravery at other times, said, *If* Mr. Lovelace had told *them* what was *not true* of her being his wife—

And Polly Horton, that she must *needs* say, the lady, if she were *not* my wife, had been very much injured; that was all.

That is not now a matter to be disputed, cried I: you and I know, madam——

'We do,—said she; and I thank God, I am *not* thine—*once more* I thank God for it—I have no doubt of the further baseness that thou hast intended me, by this vile and low trick: but I have my SENSES, Lovelace: and from my heart I despise thee, thou very poor Lovelace!—How canst thou stand in my presence? thou, that'——

Madam, madam, madam—these are insults not to be borne—and was approaching her.

She withdrew to the door, and set her back against it, holding the pointed knife to her heaving bosom; while the women held me, beseeching me not to provoke the violent lady—for their *house* sake, and be curs'd to them, they besought me—and all three hung upon me—while the truly heroic lady, braved me, at that distance.

'Approach me, Lovelace, with resentment, if thou wilt. I dare die. It is in defence of my honour. God will be merciful to my poor soul! I expect no mercy from thee! I have gained this distance, and two steps nearer me, and thou shalt see what I dare do!'——

Leave me, women, to myself, and to my angel!—They retired at a distance—O my beloved creature, how you terrify me!—Holding out my arms, and kneeling on one knee—Not a step, not a step further, except to receive my death at that injured hand which is thus held up against a life far dearer to me than my own! I am a villain! the blackest of villains—Say you will sheath your knife in the injurer's, not the injured's heart, and then will I indeed approach you, but not else.

The mother twang'd her d—n'd nose; and Sally and Polly pulled out their handkerchiefs, and turned from us. They never in their lives, they told me afterwards, beheld such a scene——

Innocence so triumphant: villany so debased, they must mean!

Unawares to myself, I had moved onward to my angel—'And dost thou, dost thou, *still* disclaiming, *still* advancing—dost thou, dost thou, *still* insidiously move towards me?' [and her hand was extended] I dare—I dare—not rashly neither—my heart from *principle* abhors the act, which *thou*

makest *necessary* !—God in thy mercy; [lifting up her eyes and hands] God, in thy mercy!'

I threw myself to the further end of the room. An ejaculation, a silent ejaculation, employing her thoughts that moment! Polly says the whites of her lovely eyes were only visible: and, in the instant that she extended her hand, *assuredly* to strike the fatal blow [how the very recital terrifies me!] she cast her eye towards me, and saw me, at the utmost distance the room would allow, and heard my broken voice—my voice was utterly broken; nor knew I what I said, or whether to the purpose or not—and her charming cheeks, that were all in a glow before, turned pale, as if terrified at her own purpose; and lifting up her eyes—' Thank God!—Thank God! said the angel—delivered *for the present*; for the *present* delivered—from myself—keep, sir, keep that distance,' [looking down towards me, who was prostrate on the floor, my heart pierced, as with an hundred daggers:] ' that distance has saved a life: to what reserved, the Almighty only knows!—

To *be* happy, madam; and to *make* happy!—And O let me but hope for your favour for to-morrow—I will put off my journey till then—and may God—

Swear not, sir!—with an awful and piercing aspect—you have too, too often sworn!—God's eye is upon us!—His more *immediate* eye; and looked wildly.—But the women looked up to the ceiling, as if *afraid* of God's eye, and trembled. And well they might; and *I* too, who so very lately had each of us the devil in our hearts.

If not to-morrow, madam, say but next Thursday, your uncle's birth-day, say but next Thursday!

' This I say, of this you may assure yourself, I

never, never *will* be yours.—And let me hope, that I may be entitled to the performance of your promise, to be permitted to leave this *innocent* house, as one called it (but long have my ears been accustomed to such inversions of words) as soon as the day breaks.'

Did my perdition depend upon it, that you cannot, madam, but upon terms. And I hope you will not terrify me—still dreading the accursed knife.

'Nothing less than an attempt upon my honour shall make me desperate. I have no view but to defend my honour: with such a view only I entered into treaty with your infamous agent below. The resolution you have seen, I trust, God will give me again, upon the same occasion. But for a *less*, I wish not for it.—Only take notice, women, that I am no wife of *this man*: basely as he has used me, I am not his wife. He has no authority over me. If he go away by and by, and you act by his authority to detain me, look to it.

Then, taking one of the lights, she turned from us; and away she went unmolested.—Not a soul was *able* to molet her.

Mabell saw her, tremblingly, and in a hurry, take the key of her chamber-door out of her pocket, and unlock it; and, as soon as she entered, heard her double-lock, bar, and bolt it.

By her taking out her key, when she came out of her chamber to us, she no doubt suspected my design: which was, to have carried her in my arms thither, if she made such force necessary, after I had intimidated her; and to have been her companion for that night.

She was to have had several bed-chamber-women to assist to undress her upon occasion: but from the moment she entered the dining-room with so much intrepidity, it was absolutely impossible to

think of prosecuting my villanous designs against her.

* * *

This, this, Belford, was the hand I made of a contrivance from which I expected so much!—And now I am ten times worse off than before.

Thou never sawest people in thy life look so like fools upon one another, as the mother, her partners, and I did, for a few minutes. And at last, the two devilish nymphs broke out into insulting ridicule upon me; while the old wretch was concerned for her house, the reputation of her house. I cursed them all together; and, retiring to my chamber, locked myself in.

And now it is time to set out: all I have gained, detection, disgrace, fresh guilt by repeated perjuries, and to be despised by her I *doat upon;* and what is still worse to a proud heart, by *myself.*

Success, success in projects, is every thing. What an admirable contriver did I think myself till now! even for *this* scheme among the rest! But how pitifully foolish does it now appear to me!—Scratch out, erase, never to be read, every part of my preceding letters, where I have boastingly mentioned it. And never presume to rally me upon the cursed subject: for I cannot bear it.

But for the lady, by my soul, I love her. I admire her, more than ever! I *must* have her. I *will* have her still—with honour or *without,* as I have often vowed. My cursed fright at her accidental bloody nose, so lately, put her upon improving upon me thus. Had she threatened ME, I should soon have been master of *one* arm, and *in both!* But for so sincere a virtue to threaten *herself,* and not to offer to intimidate *any other,* and with so much presence of mind, as to distinguish, in the very passionate intention, the necessity of the act, in defence

of her *honour*, and so *fairly* to disavow *lesser* occasions: showed such a deliberation, such a choice, such a principle; and then keeping me so watchfully at a distance, that I could not seize her hand, so soon as she could have given the fatal blow; how impossible not to be subdued by so *true* and so *discreet* a magnanimity!

But she is not *gone*. She shall not go. I will press her with letters for the Thursday. She shall yet be mine, legally mine. For, as to cohabitation, there is no such thing to be thought of.

The captain shall give her away, as proxy for her uncle. My lord will die. My fortune will help my *will*, and set me above every thing and every body.

But here is the curse—she despises me, Jack!—What man, as I have heretofore said, can bear to be despised—especially by his wife!—O Lord! O Lord! what a hand, what a cursed hand, have I made of this plot!—And here ends

The History of the Lady and the Penknife!—The devil take the penknife!—It goes against me to say, God bless the lady!

Near 5, Sat. morn.

LETTER XIV.

MR. LOVELACE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE,

Superscribed to Mrs. Lovelace.

M. Hall, Sat. night, June 24.

MY DEAREST LIFE,

If you do not impute to love, and to terror raised by love, the poor figure I made before you last night, you will not do me justice. I thought I would try to the very last moment, if, by comply-

ing with you in *every thing*, I could prevail upon you to promise to be mine on Thursday next, since you refused me an earlier day. Could I have been so happy, you had not been hindered going to Hampstead, or wherever else you pleased. But when I could not prevail upon you to give me this assurance, what room had I (my demerit so great) to suppose, that your going thither would not be to lose you for ever?

I will own to you, madam, that yesterday afternoon I picked up the paper dropped by Dorcas; who has confessed that she would have assisted you in getting away, if she had had an opportunity so to do; and undoubtedly dropped it by *accident*. And could I have prevailed upon you as to Thursday next, I would have made no use of it; secure as I should then have been in your word given, to be mine. But when I found you inflexible, I was resolved to try, if by resenting Dorcas's treachery, I could not make *your* pardon of *me* the condition of *mine* to *her*: and if not, to make a handle of it to revoke my consent to your going away from Mrs. Sinclair's; since the consequence of that must have been so fatal to me.

So far, indeed, was my proceeding *low* and *artful*: and when I was challenged with it as such, in so high and noble a manner, I could not avoid taking shame to myself upon it.

But you must permit me, madam, to hope, that you will not punish me too heavily for so poor a contrivance, since no dishonour was meant you: and since, in the moment of its execution, you had as great an instance of my incapacity to defend a wrong, a low measure, and, at the same time, of your power over me, as mortal man could give—in a word, since you must have seen, that I was absolutely under the control both of conscience and of love.

I will not offer to defend myself, for *wishing you to remain where you are,* till either you give me your word to meet me at the altar on Thursday; or till I have the honour of attending you, preparative to the solemnity which will make that day the happiest day of my life.

I am but too sensible, that this kind of treatment may appear to you with the face of an arbitrary and illegal imposition: but as the consequences, not only to *ourselves,* but to *both our families,* may be fatal, if you cannot be moved in my favour: let me beseech you to forgive this act of compulsion, on the score of the necessity you your dear self have laid me under to be guilty of it; and to permit the solemnity of next Thursday to include an act of oblivion of all past offences.

The orders I have given to the people of the house are: 'That you shall be obeyed in every particular that is consistent with my expectations of finding you there on my return to town on Wednesday next: that Mrs. Sinclair and her nieces, having incurred your just displeasure, shall not, without your orders, come into your presence: that neither shall Dorcas, till she has fully cleared her conduct to your satisfaction, be permitted to attend you: but Mabell, in her place; of whom you seemed some time ago to express some liking. Will, I have left behind me to attend your commands. If he be either negligent or impertinent, *your* dismission shall be a dismission of him from my service for ever. But, as to letters which may be sent you, or any which you may have to send, I must humbly intreat, that none such pass *from* or *to* you, for the few days that I shall be absent.' But I do assure you, madam, that the seals of both sorts shall be sacred: and the letters, if such be sent, shall be given into your own hands the moment the ceremony is performed, or before, if you require it.

Meantime I will inquire, and send you word, how Miss Howe does; and to what, if I can be informed, her long silence is owing.

Dr. Perkins I found here, attending my lord, when I arrived with Dr. S. He acquaints me that your father, mother, uncles, and the still *less* worthy persons of your family, are well; and intend to be all at your uncle Harlowe's next week; I presume, with intent to keep his anniversary. This can make no alteration, but a happy one, as to *persons*, on Thursday; because Mr. Tomlinson assured me, that if any thing fell out to hinder your uncle's coming up in person, (which, however, he did not then expect) he would be satisfied if his friend the captain were proxy for him. I shall send a man and horse to-morrow to the captain, to be at a greater certainty.

I send this by a special messenger, who will wait your pleasure in relation to the impatiently wished-for Thursday: which I humbly hope will be signified by a line.

My lord, though hardly sensible, and unmindful of every thing but of our felicity, desires his most affectionate compliments to you. He has in readiness to present to you a very valuable set of jewels, which he hopes will be acceptable, whether he lives to see you adorn them or not.

Lady Sarah and Lady Betty have also their tokens of respect ready to court your acceptance: but may heaven incline you to give the opportunity of receiving their personal compliments, and those of my cousins Montague, before the next week be out!

His lordship is exceeding ill. Dr. S. has no hopes of him. The only consolation I can have for the death of a relation who loves me so well, if he *do*

die, must arise from the additional power it will put into my hands of showing how much I am,

My dearest life,

Your ever affectionate and faithful,

LOVELACE.

LETTER XV.

MR. LOVELACE TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE,

Superscribed to Mrs. Lovelace.

M. Hall, Sunday night, June 25.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

I CANNOT find words to express how much I am mortified at the return of my messenger without a line from you.

Thursday is so near, that I will send messenger after messenger every four hours, till I have a favourable answer; the one to meet the other, till its eve arrives, to know if I may venture to appear in your presence with the hope of having my wishes answered on that day.

Your love, madam, I neither expect, nor ask for; nor will, till my future behaviour gives you cause to think I deserve it. All I at present presume to wish is, to have it in my power to do you all the justice I can now do you: and to your generosity will I leave it, to reward me as I shall merit, with your affection.

At present revolving my poor behaviour of Friday night before you, I think I should sooner choose to go to my last audit, unprepared for it as I am, than to appear in your presence, unless you give me some hope, that I shall be received as your elected husband, rather than, (however deserved) as a detested criminal.

Let me therefore propose an expedient, in order to spare my own confusion; and to spare you the necessity for that soul-harrowing recrimination, which I cannot stand, and which must be disagreeable to yourself—to name the church, and I will have every thing in readiness; so that our next interview will be, in a manner, at the very altar; and then you will have the kind husband to forgive for the faults of the ungrateful lover. If your resentment be still too high to write more, let it only be in your own dear hand, these words, *St. Martin's Church, Thursday*—or these, *St. Giles's Church, Thursday;* nor will I insist upon any inscription or subscription, or so much as the initials of your name. This shall be all the favour I will expect, till the dear hand itself is given to mine, in presence of that Being whom I invoke as a witness of the inviolable faith and honour of

Your adoring

LOVELACE.

LETTER XVI.

MR. LOVELACE TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE,

Superscribed to Mrs. Lovelace.

M. Hall, Monday, June 26.

ONCE more, my dearest love, do I conjure you to send me the four requested words. There is no time to be lost. And I would not have next Thursday go over, without being entitled to call you mine, for the world; and that as well for your sake as my own. Hitherto all that has passed is between you and me only; but, after Thursday, if my wishes are unanswered, the whole will be before the world.

My lord is extremely ill, and endures not to have me out of his sight for one half hour. But this shall

not have the least weight with me, if you be pleased to hold out the olive branch to me in the four requested words.

I have the following intelligence from Captain Tomlinson.

'All your family are at your uncle Harlowe's. Your uncle finds he cannot go up; and names Captain Tomlinson for his proxy. He proposes to keep all your family with him, till the captain assures him that the ceremony is over.

'Already he has begun, with hope of success, to try to reconcile your mother to you.'

My Lord M. but just now has told me, how happy he should think himself to have an opportunity, before he dies, to salute you as his niece. I have put him in hopes, that he shall see you; and have told him, that I will go to town on Wednesday, in order to prevail upon you to accompany me down on Thursday or Friday. I have ordered a set to be in readiness to carry me up; and, were not my lord so very ill, my cousin Montague tells me, she would offer her attendance on you. If you please, therefore, we can set out for this place the moment the solemnity is performed.

Do not, dearest creature, dissipate all these promising appearances, and by refusing to save your own and your family's reputation in the eye of the world, use yourself worse than the ungratefullest wretch on earth has used you. For if we are married, all the disgrace you imagine you have suffered while a single lady, will be my own; and only known to ourselves.

Once more then, consider well the situation we are both in; and remember, my dearest life, that Thursday will be soon here; and that you have no time to lose.

In a letter sent by the messenger whom I dis-

patch with this, I have desired that my friend, Mr. Belford, who is your very great admirer, and who knows all the secrets of my heart, will wait upon you, to know what I am to depend upon, as to the chosen day.

Surely, my dear, you never could, at any time, suffer half so much from cruel suspense, as I do.

If I have not an answer to this, either from your own goodness, or through Mr. Belford's intercession, it will be too late for me to set out: and Captain Tomlinson will be disappointed, who goes to town on purpose to attend your pleasure.

One motive for the gentle restraint I have presumed to lay you under, is, to prevent the mischiefs that might ensue (as probably to the *more* innocent, as to the *less*) were you to write to any body while your passions were so much raised and inflamed against me. Having apprised you of my direction to the women in town on this head, I wonder you should have endeavoured to send a letter to Miss Howe, although in a cover directed to that young lady's* servant; as you must think it would be likely to fall into my hands.

The just sense of what I have deserved the contents *should be*, leaves me no room to doubt what they *are*. Nevertheless, I return it you inclosed, with the seal, as you will see, unbroken.

Relieve, I beseech you, dearest madam, by the four requested words, or by Mr. Belford, the anxiety of

Your ever-affectionate and obliged

LOVELACE.

Remember, there will not, there *cannot* be time for further writing, and for coming-up by Thursday, *your uncle's birth-day*.

* The lady had made an attempt to send away a letter.

LETTER XVII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Monday, June 26.

THOU wilt see the situation I am in with Miss Harlowe by the inclosed copies of three letters; to two of which I am so much scorned as not to have one word given me in answer; and of the third (now sent by the messenger who brings thee this) I am afraid as little notice will be taken—and if so, her day of grace is absolutely over.

One would imagine (so long used to constraint too as she has been) that she might have been satisfied with the triumph she had over us all on Friday night: a triumph that to this hour has sunk my pride and my vanity so much, that I almost hate the words, *plot, contrivance, scheme;* and shall mistrust myself in future, for every one that rises to my inventive head.

But seest thou not, that I am under a necessity to continue her at Sinclair's, and to prohibit all her correspondences?

Now, Belford, as I really, in my present mood, think of nothing less than marrying her, if she let not Thursday slip; I would have thee attend her, in pursuance of the intimation I have given her in my letter of this date; and vow for me, swear for me, bind thy soul to her for my honour, and use what arguments thy friendly heart can suggest, in order to procure me an answer from her; which, as thou wilt see, she may give in four words only. And then I purpose to leave Lord M. (dangerously ill as he is) and meet her at her appointed church, in order to solemnize: if she will sign but *Cl. H.* to *thy* writing the four words, that shall do: for I

would not come up to be made a fool of in the face of all my family and friends.

If she should let the day go off;—I shall be desperate. I am entangled in my own devices, and cannot bear that she should detect me.

O that I had been honest!—What a devil are all my plots come to! What do they end in, but one grand plot upon myself, and a title to eternal infamy and disgrace! But, depending on thy friendly offices, I will say no more of this.—Let her send me but one line!—But *one* line!—To treat me as *unworthy* of her notice; yet be altogether in my power—I cannot—I will not bear that.

My lord, as I said, is extremely ill. The doctors give him over. He gives himself over. Those who would not have him die, are afraid he will die. But as to myself, I am doubtful: for these long and violent struggles between the constitution and the disease (though the latter has three physicians and an apothecary to help it forward, and all three, as to their prescriptions, of different opinions too) indicate a plaguy tough habit, and savour more of recovery than death: and the more so, as he has no sharp or acute mental organs to whet out his bodily ones, and to raise his fever above the symptomatic helpful one.

Thou wilt see in the inclosed what pains I am at to dispatch messengers; who are constantly on the road to meet each other, and one of them to link in the chain with a fourth, whose station is in London, and five miles onward, or till met. But, in truth, I have some other matters for them to perform at the same time, with my lord's banker and his lawyer; which will enable me, if his lordship is so good as to die this bout, to be an over-match for some of my other relations. I don't mean Charlotte and Patty: for they are noble girls; but

others, who have been scratching and clawing under-ground like so many moles in my absence; and whose workings I have discovered since I have been down, by the little heaps of dirt they have thrown up.

A speedy account of thy commission, dear Jack! The letter travels all night.

LETTER XVIII.

MR. BELFORD TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

London, June 27. Tuesday.

You must excuse me, Lovelace, from engaging in the office you would have me undertake, till I can be better assured you really intend honourably at last by this much-injured lady!

I believe you know your friend Belford too well, to think he would be easy with you, or with any man alive, who should seek to make him promise for him what he never intended to perform. And let me tell thee, that I have not much confidence in the honour of a man, who by *imitation of hands* (I will only call it) has shown so little regard to the honour of his own relations.

Only that thou hast such jesuitical qualifyings, or I should think thee at last touched with remorse, and brought within view of being ashamed of thy cursed inventions by the ill success of thy last: which I heartily congratulate thee upon.

O the divine lady!—But I will not aggravate.

Nevertheless, when thou writest, that, in thy *present mood*, thou thinkest of marrying, and yet canst so *easily* change thy *mood*: when I know thy heart is against the state:—that the four words thou courtest from the lady are as much to thy

purpose as if she wrote forty; since it will show she can forgive the highest injury that can be offered to woman: and when I recollect how easily thou canst find excuses to postpone, thou must be more explicit a good deal, as to thy real intentions, and future honour, than thou art: for I cannot trust to a temporary remorse; which is brought on by disappointment too, and not by principle; and the like of which thou hast so often got over.

If thou canst convince me time enough for the day, that thou meanest to do honourably by her, in *her own* sense of the word; or, if not time enough, wilt fix some other day (which thou oughtest to leave to her option, and not bind her down for the Thursday; and the rather, as thy pretence for so doing is founded on an absolute fiction); I will then most cheerfully undertake thy cause; by *person*, if she will admit me to her presence, if she will not, by *pen*. But, in this case, thou must allow me to be guarantee for thy faith. And, if so, as much as I value thee, and respect thy skill in all the qualifications of a gentleman, thou mayest depend upon it, that I will act up to the character of a guarantee, with more honour than the princes of our day usually do——to their shame be it spoken.

Meantime, let me tell thee, that my heart bleeds for the wrongs this angelic lady has received: and if thou dost *not* marry her, if she will *have* thee; and, when married, make her the best and tenderest of husbands, I would rather be a dog, a monkey, a bear, a viper, or a toad, than thee.

Command me with honour, and thou shalt find none readier to oblige thee, than

Thy sincere friend,

JOHN BELFORD.

LETTER XIX.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

M. Hall, June 27. Tuesday night, near 12.

YOURS reached me this moment by an extraordinary push in the messengers.

What a man of honour, thou, of a sudden!—

And so, in the imaginary shape of a guarantee, thou threatenest me!

Had I *not* been in earnest as to the lady, I should not have offered to employ thee in the affair. But, let me say, that *hadst* thou undertaken the task, and I had afterwards thought fit to change my mind, I should have contented myself to tell thee, that that *was* my mind when thou engagedst for me, and to have given thee the reasons for the change, and then left thee to thy own discretion: for never knew I what fear of man was—nor fear of woman neither, till I became acquainted with Miss Clarissa Harlowe: nay, what is *most* surprising, till I came to have her in my power.

And so thou wilt not wait upon the charmer of my heart, but upon terms and conditions!—Let it alone, and be cursed; I care not—but so much credit did I give to the value thou expressedst for *her*, that I thought the office would have been as acceptable to *thee*, as serviceable to me; for what was it, but to endeavour to persuade her to consent to the reparation of her own honour? for what have I done but disgraced myself, and been a thief to my own joys?—And if there be an union of hearts, and an intention to solemnize, what is there wanting but the foolish ceremony?—And that I still offer. But if she will keep back her hand; if she will make me hold out mine in vain—how can I help it?

I write her one more letter, and if, after she has received that, she keeps sullen silence, she must thank herself for what is to follow.

But, after all, my heart is wholly hers. I love her beyond expression; and cannot help it. I hope therefore she will receive this last tender as I wish. I hope she intends not, like a true woman, to plague, and vex, and tease me, now she has found her power. If she will take me to mercy now these remorses are upon me, (though I scorn to condition with *thee* for my sincerity) all her trials, as I have heretofore declared, shall be over; and she shall be as happy as I can make her: for, ruminating upon all that has passed between us, from the first hour of our acquaintance till the present, I must pronounce, that she is virtue itself, and once more I say, has no equal.

As to what you hint, of leaving to her choice another day, do you consider, that it will be impossible, that my contrivances and stratagems should be much longer concealed?—This makes me press *that* day, though so near; and the more as I have made so much ado about her uncle's anniversary. If she send me the *four words*, I will spare no fatigue to be in time, if not for the canonical hour at church, for some other hour of the day in her own apartment, or any other: for money will do every thing: and *that* I have never spared in this affair.

To show thee, that I am not at enmity with thee, I inclose the copies of two letters—one to her: it is the *fourth*, and must be the *last* on the subject.—The other to Captain Tomlinson; calculated, as thou wilt see, for him to show her.

And now, Jack, interfere, in this case or not, thou knowest the mind of

R. LOVELACE.

LETTER XX.

MR. LOVELACE TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE,

Superscribed to Mrs. Lovelace.

M. Hall, Wed. morn. one o'clock, June 28.

Not one line, my dearest life, not one word, in answer to three letters I have written! The time is now so short, that this *must* be the last letter that can reach you on this side of the important hour that might make us legally one.

My friend Mr. Belford is apprehensive, that he cannot wait upon you in time, by reason of some urgent affairs of his own.

I the less regret the disappointment, because I have procured a *more* acceptable person, as I hope, to attend you; Captain Tomlinson I mean: to whom I had applied for this purpose, before I had Mr. Belford's answer.

I was the more solicitous to obtain this favour from him, because of the office he is to take upon him, as I humbly presume to hope to-morrow. That office obliged him to be in town as this day: and I acquainted him with my unhappy situation with you; and desired, that he would show me on this occasion, that I had as much of his favour and friendship, as your uncle had; since the whole treaty must be broken off, if he could not prevail upon you in my behalf.

He will dispatch the messenger directly; whom I propose to meet in person at Slough; either to proceed onward to London with a joyful heart, or to return back to M. Hall with a broken one.

I ought not (but cannot help it) to anticipate the pleasure Mr. Tomlinson proposes to himself, in acquainting you with the likelihood there is of your mother's seconding your uncle's views. For,

it seems he has privately communicated to her his laudable intentions: and *her* resolution depends, as well as *his*, upon what to-morrow will produce.

Disappoint not them, I beseech you, for an hundred persons' sakes, as well as for mine, *that* uncle and *that* mother, whose displeasure I have heard you so often deplore.

You may think it impossible for me to reach London by the canonical hour. If it should, the ceremony may be performed in your own apartment, at any time in the day, or at night: so that Captain Tomlinson may have it to aver to your uncle, that it was performed on his anniversary.

Tell but the captain, that you *forbid me not* to attend you: and that shall be sufficient for bringing to you on the wings of love,

Your ever-grateful and affectionate

LOVELACE.

LETTER XXI.

TO MR. PATRICK M'DONALD,

At his lodgings, at Mr. Brown's, perukemaker, in St. Martin's Lane, Westminster.

M. Hall, Wedn. morning, two o'clock.

DEAR M'DONALD,

THE bearer of this has a letter to carry to the lady *. I have been at the trouble of writing a copy of it; which I inclose, that you may not mistake your cue.

You will judge of my reasons for ante-dating the inclosed sealed one † directed to you by the name of Tomlinson; which you are to show the lady, as in confidence. You will open it of course.

* See the preceding letter. † See the next letter.

I doubt not your dexterity and management, dear M'Donald; nor your zeal; especially as the hope of cohabitation must now be given up. Impossible to be carried is that scheme. I might break her heart, but not incline her will—am in earnest therefore to marry her, if she let not the day slip.

Improve upon the hint of her mother. That may touch her. But John Harlowe, *remember*, has *privately* engaged that lady—*privately*, I say; else (not to mention the reason for her uncle Harlowe's former expedient) you know, she might find means to get a letter away to the one or the other, to know the truth; or to Miss Howe, to engage *her* to inquire into it: and if she should, the word *privately* will account for the uncle's and mother's denying it.

However, fail not, as from me, to charge our mother and her nymphs to redouble their vigilance both as to her person and letters. All is upon a crisis now. But she must not be treated ill neither.

Thursday over, I shall know what to resolve upon.

If necessary, you must assume authority. The devil's in't, if such a girl as this shall awe a man of your years and experience. You are not in love with her as I am. Fly out, if she doubt your honour. Spirits *naturally* soft may be beat out of their play, and borne down (though ever so much raised) by higher anger. All women are cowards at bottom: only violent where they *may*. I have often stormed a girl out of her mistrust, and made her yield (before she knew where she was) to the point indignantly *mistrusted*; and that to make up with me, though I was the aggressor.

If this matter succeed as I'd have it, (or if *not*, and do not fail by your fault) I will take you off the necessity of pursuing your cursed smuggling;

which otherwise may one day end fatally for you.

We are none of us perfect, M'Donald. This sweet lady makes me serious sometimes in spite of my heart. But as private vices are less blamable than public; and as I think *smuggling* (as it is called) a national evil; I have no doubt to pronounce you a much worse man than myself, and as such shall take pleasure in reforming you.

I send you inclosed ten guineas, as a small earnest of further favours. Hitherto you have been a very clever fellow.

As to clothes for Thursday, Monmouth Street will afford a ready supply. Clothes quite new would make your condition suspected. But you may defer that care, till you see if she can be prevailed upon. Your riding dress will do for the first visit. Nor let your boots be over-clean. I have always told you the consequence of attending to the *minutiæ*, where art (or *imposture*, as the ill-mannered would call it) is designed—your linen rumpled and soily, when you wait upon her—easy terms these—just come to town—remember (as formerly) to loll, to throw out your legs, to stroke and grasp down your ruffles, as if of significance enough to be careless. What though the presence of a fine lady would require a different behaviour, are you not of years to dispense with politeness? You can have no design upon her, you know. You are a father yourself of daughters as old as she. Evermore is *parade* and *obsequiousness* suspectable: it must show either a foolish head, or a knavish heart. Assume airs of *consequence* therefore; and you will be treated as a *man* of consequence. I have often more than half-ruined myself by my complaisance; and, being afraid of control, have brought control upon myself.

I think I have no more to say at present. I intend to be at Slough, or on the way to it, as by mine to the lady. Adieu, honest M'Donald.

R. L.

LETTER XXII.

TO CAPTAIN ANTONY TOMLINSON.

[*Inclosed in the preceding; to be shown to the lady as in confidence.*]

M. Hall, Tuesday morn. June 27.

DEAR CAPT. TOMLINSON,

An unhappy misunderstanding having arisen between the dearest lady in the world and me (the particulars of which she perhaps may give you, but I will not, because I might be thought partial to myself); and she refusing to answer my most pressing and respectful letters; I am at a most perplexing uncertainty whether she will meet us or not next Thursday, to solemnize.

My lord is so extremely ill, that if I thought she would not oblige me, I would defer going up to town for two or three days. He cares not to have me out of his sight: yet is impatient to salute my beloved as his niece before he dies. This I have promised to give him an opportunity to do: intending, if the dear creature will make me happy, to set out with her for this place directly from church.

With regret I speak it of the charmer of my soul; that irreconcileableness is her family-fault—the less excusable indeed in *her*, as she herself suffers by it in so high a degree from her own relations.

Now, sir, as you *intended* to be in town some time before Thursday, if it be not too great an in-

convenience to you, I could be glad you would go up as soon as possible, for my sake: and this I the more boldly request, as I presume that a man who has so many great affairs of his own in hand as you have, would be glad to be at a certainty himself as to the day.

You, sir, can so pathetically and justly set before her the unhappy consequences that will follow if the day be postponed, as well with regard to her uncle's disappointment, as to the part *you have assured me* her mother is willing to take in the wished-for reconciliation, that I have great hopes she will suffer herself to be prevailed upon. And a man and horse shall be in waiting to take your dispatches and bring them to me.

But if you cannot prevail in my favour, you will be pleased to satisfy your friend Mr. John Harlowe, that it is not my fault that he is not obliged.

I am, dear sir,
Your extremely obliged
and faithful servant,
R. LOVELACE.

LETTER XXIII.

TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

HONOURED SIR, Wed. June 28, near 12 o'clock.

I RECEIVED yours, as your servant desired me to acquaint you, *by ten this morning*. Horse and man were in a foam.

I instantly equipped myself, as if come off from a journey, and posted away to the lady, intending to plead great affairs that I came not before, in order to favour your *antedate*; and likewise to be in a *hurry* to have a pretence to *hurry her ladyship*, and

to take no denial for her giving a *satisfactory* return to your messenger: but, upon my entering Mrs. Sinclair's house, I found all in the greatest consternation.

You must not, sir, be surprised. It is a trouble to me to be the relater of the bad news: but so it is —the lady is gone off. She was missed but half an hour before I came.

Her waiting-maid is run away, or hitherto is not to be found: so that they conclude it was by her connivance.

They had sent, before I came, to my honoured masters Mr. Belton, Mr. Mowbray, and Mr. Belford. Mr. Tourville is out of town.

High words are passing between Madam Sinclair, and Madam Horton, and Madam Martin; as also with Dorcas. And your servant William threatens to hang or drown himself.

They have sent to know if they can hear of Mabell, the waiting maid, at her mother's, who it seems lives in Chick Lane, West Smithfield; and to an uncle of her's also who keeps an ale-house at Cow Cross, hard by, and with whom she lived last.

Your messenger having just changed his horse, is come back; so I will not detain him longer than to add, that I am, with great concern for this misfortune, and thanks for your seasonable favour and kind intentions towards me—[I am sure this was not my fault]

Honoured sir,

Your most obliged humble servant,

PATRICK M'DONALD.

LETTER XXIV.

MR. MOWBRAY TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

DEAR LOVELACE, Wednesday, 12 o'clock.

I HAVE plaguy news to acquaint thee with, Miss Harlowe is gone off!—Quite gone, by my soul—I have not time for particulars, your servant being going off. But if I had, we are not yet come to the bottom of the matter. The ladies here are all blubbering like devils, accusing one another most confoundedly: whilst Belton and I d—n them altogether in thy name.

If thou shouldst hear that thy fellow Willis taken dead out of some horse-pond, and Dorcas cut down from her bed's teaster, from dangling in her own garters, be not surprised. Here's the devil to pay. Nobody serene but Jack Belford, who is taking minutes of examinations, accusations, and confessions, with the significant air of a Middlesex justice; and intends to write at large all particulars, I suppose.

I heartily condole with thee; so does Belton. But it may turn out for the best: for she is gone away with thy marks, I understand. A foolish little devil! Where will she mend herself? For nobody will look upon her. And they tell me that thou wouldst certainly have married her, had she staid. But I know thee better.

Dear Bobby, adieu. If Lord M. will die now, to comfort thee for this loss, what a *seasonable* exit would he make! Let's have a letter from thee. Pr'ythee do. Thou can'st write devil-like to Belford, who shows us nothing at all.

Thine heartily,

RD. MOWBRAY.

LETTER XXV.

MR. BELFORD TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Thursday, June 29.

Thou hast heard from M'Donald and Mowbray the news. Bad or good, I know not which thou'lt deem it. I only wish I could have given thee joy upon the same account, before the unhappy lady was seduced from Hampstead; for then of what an ungrateful villany hadst thou been spared the perpetration, which now thou hast to answer for!

I came to town purely to serve thee with her, expecting that thy next would satisfy me that I might endeavour it without dishonour. And at first when I found her gone, I half pitied thee; for now wilt thou be inevitably blown up: and in what an execrable light wilt thou appear to all the world!—Poor Lovelace! Caught in thy own snares! Thy punishment is but beginning!

But to my narrative; for I suppose thou expectest all particulars from me, since Mowbray has informed thee that I have been collecting them.

'The noble exertion of spirit she had made on Friday night, had, it seems, greatly disordered her; insomuch that she was not visible till Saturday evening; when Mabell saw her; and she seemed to be very ill: but on Sunday morning, having dressed herself, as if designing to go to church, she ordered Mabell to get her a coach to the door.

'The wench told her, she was to obey her in every thing but the calling of a coach or chair, or in relation to letters.

'She sent for Will, and gave him the same command.

'He pleaded his master's orders to the contrary, and desired to be excused.

'Upon this, down she went, herself, and would have gone out without observation: but finding the street door double-locked, and the key not in the lock, she stept into the street parlour, and would have thrown up the sash to call out to the people passing by, as they doubted not: but that, since her last attempt of the same nature, had been fastened down.

'Hereupon she resolutely stept into Mrs. Sinclair's parlour in the back-house; where were the old devil and her two partners: and demanded the key of the street-door, or to have it opened for her.

'They were all surprised! but desired to be excused, and pleaded your orders.

'She asserted that you had no authority over her; and never should have any: that their present refusal was their own act and deed: she saw the intent of their back-house, and the reason of putting her there: she pleaded her condition and fortune; and said, they had no way to avoid utter ruin, but by opening their doors to her, or by murdering her, and burying her in their garden or cellar too deep for detection: that already what had been done to her was punishable by death: and bid them at their peril detain her.'

What a noble, what a right spirit has this charming creature, in cases that will justify an exertion of spirit!—

'They answered, that Mr. Lovelace could prove his marriage, and would indemnify them. And they all would have vindicated their behaviour on Friday night, and the reputation of their house; but refusing to hear them on that topic, she flung from them threatening.

'She then went up half a dozen stairs in her way to her own apartment: but, as if she had bethought herself, down she stept again, and proceeded towards the street parlour, saying, as she passed by the infamous Dorcas, I'll make myself protectors though the windows suffer: but that wench, of her own head, on the lady's going out of that parlour to Mrs. Sinclair's, had locked the door, and taken out the key: so that finding herself disappointed, she burst into tears, and went sobbing and menacing up stairs again.

'She made no other attempt till the effectual one, your letters and messages, they suppose, coming so fast upon one another, (though she would not answer one of them) gave *her* some amusement, and an assurance to *them*, that she would at last forgive you; and that then all would end as you wished.

'The women, in pursuance of your orders, offered not to obtrude themselves upon her; and Dorcas also kept out of her sight all the rest of Sunday; also Monday and Tuesday. But by the lady's condescension (even to familiarity) to Mabell, they imagined that she must be working in her mind all that time to get away: they therefore redoubled their cautions to the wench; who told them so faithfully all that passed between her lady and her, that they had no doubt of her fidelity to her wicked trust.

''Tis probable she might have been contriving something all this time; but saw no room for perfecting any scheme; the contrivance by which she effected her escape seems to me not to have been fallen upon till the very day; since it depended partly upon the *weather*, as it proved. But it is evident she hoped something from Mabell's simplicity, or gratitude, or compassion, by cultivating all the time her civility to her.

'Polly waited on her early on Wednesday morning; and met with a better reception than she had *reason* to expect. She complained, however, with warmth of her confinement. Polly said there would be an happy end to it (if it *were* a confinement) next day, she presumed. She absolutely declared to the contrary, in the way Polly meant it; and said, that Mr. Lovelace, on his return, [*which looked as if she intended to wait for it*] should have reason to repent the orders he had given, as *they all should* the observance of them: let him send twenty letters, she would not answer one, be the consequence what it would; nor give him hope of the least favour, while she was in that house. She had given Mrs. Sinclair and themselves fair warning, she said: no orders of another ought to make them detain a free person: but having made an open attempt to *go*, and been detained by them, she was the calmer, she told Polly; let *them* look to the consequence.

'But yet she spoke this with temper: and Polly gave it as her opinion, (with apprehension for their own safety) that having so good a handle to punish them all, she would not go away if she might. And what, inferred Polly, is the indemnity of a man who has committed the vilest of rapes on a person of condition; and must himself, if prosecuted for it, either fly, or be hanged?

'Sinclair [so I will still call her] upon this representation of Polly foresaw, she said, *the ruin of her poor house* in the issue of this *strange* business; and the infamous Sally and Dorcas bore their parts in the apprehension: and this put them upon thinking it advisable for the future, that the street-door should generally in the day-time be only left upon a bolt-latch, as they called it, which any body might open on the inside; and that the key should be

kept in the door; that their numerous *comers* and *goers*, as they called their guests, should be able to give evidence, *that she might have gone out if she would*: not forgetting, however, to renew their orders to Will, to Dorcas, to Mabell, and the rest, to redouble their vigilance on this occasion to prevent her escape:—none of them doubting, at the same time, that her love of a man so considerable in *their* eyes, and the prospect of what was to happen as she had reason to believe on Thursday, her uncle's birth-day, would (though perhaps not till the *last hour*, for her *pride sake*, was the word) engage her to change her temper.

'They believe, that she discovered the key to be left in the door; for she was down more than once to walk in the little garden, and seemed to cast her eye each time to the street-door.

'About eight yesterday morning, an hour after Polly had left her, she told Mabell, she was sure she should not live long; and having a good many suits of apparel, which after her death would be of no use to any body she valued, she would give her a brown lustring gown, which, with some alterations to make it more suitable to her degree, would a great while serve her for a Sunday wear; for that she (Mabell) was the only person in that house of whom she could think, without terror or antipathy.

'Mabell expressing her gratitude upon the occasion, the lady said, she had nothing to employ herself about, and if she could get a workwoman directly, she would look over her things then, and give her what she intended for her.

'Her mistress's mantua-maker, the maid replied, lived but a little way off; and she doubted not that she could procure *her*, or one of her journeywomen, to alter the gown out of hand.

'I will give you also, said she, a quilted coat, which will require but little alteration, if any; for you are much about my stature: but the gown I will give directions about, because the sleeves and the robings and facings must be altered for your wear, being, I believe, above your station; and try if you can get the workwoman, and we'll advise about it. If she cannot come now, let her come in the afternoon; but I had rather now, because it will amuse me.

'Then stepping to the window, it rains, said she, [and so it had done all the morning]: slip on the hat and short cloak I have seen you wear, and come to me when you are ready to go out, because you shall bring me in something that I want.

'Mabell equipped herself accordingly, and received her commands to buy her some trifles, and then left her; but, in her way out, stept into the back parlour, where Dorcas was with Mrs. Sinclair, telling her where she was going, and on what account, bidding Dorcas look out till she came back. So faithful was the wench to the trust reposed in her, and so little had the lady's generosity wrought upon her.

'Mrs. Sinclair commended her; Dorcas envied her, and took her cue: and Mabell soon returned with the mantua-maker's journeywoman, (she was resolved, she said, she would not come without her;) and then Dorcas went off guard.

'The lady looked out the gown and petticoat, and before the workwoman, caused Mabell to try it on; and, that it might fit the better, made the willing wench pull off her upper-petticoat, and put on that she gave her. Then she bid them go into Mr. Lovelace's apartment, and contrive about it before the pier-glass there, and stay till she came to them, to give them her opinion.

'Mabell would have taken her own clothes, and hat, and short cloak with her: but her lady said, no matter; you may put them on again here, when we have considered about the alterations: there's no occasion to litter the other room.

'They went; and instantly, as it is supposed, she slipt on Mabell's gown and petticoat over her own, which was white lustring, and put on the wench's hat, short cloak, and ordinary apron, and down she went.

'Hearing somebody tripping along the passage, both Will and Dorcas whipt to the inner-hall door, and saw her; but, taking her for Mabell, Are you going far, Mabell? cried Will.

'Without turning her face, or answering, she held out her hand, pointing to the stairs; which they construed as a caution for them to look out in her absence; and supposing she would not be long gone, as she had not in form repeated her caution to them, up went Will, tarrying at the stairs-head in expectation of the supposed Mabell's return.

'Mabell and the workwoman waited a good while, amusing themselves not disagreeably, the one with contriving in the way of her business, the other delighting herself with her fine gown and coat: but at last, wondering the lady did not come to them, Mabell tiptoed it to her door, and tapping, and not being answered, stept into the chamber.

'Will at that instant, from his station at the stairs-head, seeing Mabell in her *lady's* clothes; for he had been told of the present, [gifts to servants fly from servant to servant in a minute] was very much surprised, having, as he thought, just seen her go out in *her own;* and stepping up, met her at the door. How the devil can this be? said he: just now you went out in your own dress! How came you here in this? And how could you pass

me unseen? But nevertheless, kissing her, said, he would now brag he had kissed his lady, or one in her clothes.

'I am glad, Mr. William, cried Mabell, to see you here so diligently. But know you where my lady is?

'In my master's apartment, answered Will. Is she not? Was she not talking with you this moment?

'No, that's Mrs. Dolins's journeywoman.

'They both stood aghast, as they said; Will again recollecting he had seen Mabell, as he thought, go out in her own clothes. And while they were debating and wondering up comes Dorcas with your fourth letter, just then brought for her lady; and seeing Mabell dressed out, (whom she had likewise beheld a little before, as she supposed, in her common clothes;) she joined in the wonder; till Mabell, re-entering the lady's apartment, missed her own clothes; and then suspecting what had happened, and letting the others into the ground of her suspicion, they all agreed that she had certainly escaped. And then followed such an uproar of mutual accusation, and *you should have done this,* and *you should have done that,* as alarmed the whole house; every apartment in both houses giving up its devil, to the number of fourteen or fifteen, including the mother and her partners.

'Will told them *his* story; and then ran out, as on the like occasion formerly, to make inquiry whether the lady was seen by any of the coachmen, chairmen, or porters, plying in that neighbourhood: while Dorcas cleared herself immediately, and that at the poor Mabell's expense, who made a figure as guilty as awkward, having on the suspected price of her treachery; which Dorcas, out of envy, was ready to tear from her back.

'Hereupon all the pack opened at the poor wench, while the mother foaming, at the mouth, bellowed out her orders for seizing the suspected offender; who could neither be heard in her own defence, nor, *had* she been heard, would have been believed.

'That such a perfidious wretch should ever disgrace *her* house, was the mother's cry; *good people might* be corrupted; but it was a fine thing if such a house as *hers* could not be faithfully served by cursed creatures, who were hired knowing the business they were to be employed in, and who had no pretence to *principle!*—D—n her! the wretch proceeded — She had no patience with her! Call the cook, and call the scullion!

'They were at hand.

'See that guilty *pyeball* devil, was her word (her lady's gown upon her back)—but I'll punish her for a warning to all betrayers of their trust. Put on the great gridiron this moment [an oath or a curse at every word]: make up a roaring fire—the cleaver bring me this instant—I'll cut her into quarters with my own hands; and carbonade and broil the traitress for a feast to all the dogs and cats in the neighbourhood, and eat the first slice of the toad myself, without salt or pepper.

'The poor Mabell, frighted out of her wits, expected every moment to be torn in pieces, having half a score open clawed paws upon her all at once. She promised to confess all. But that all, when she had obtained a hearing, was nothing; for *nothing* had she to confess.

'Sally hereupon, with a *curse of mercy*, ordered her to retire; undertaking that she and Polly would examine her themselves, that they might be able to write all particulars to his *honour*; and then, if she could not clear herself, or, if guilty, give

some account of the lady, (who had been so *wicked* as to give them all this trouble) so as they might get her again, then the cleaver and the gridiron might go to work with all her heart.

'The wench, glad of this reprieve, went up stairs; and while Sally was laying out the law, and prating away in her usual dictatorial manner, whipt on another gown, and sliding down stairs, escaped to her relations. And this flight, which was certainly more owing to *terror* than *guilt*, was, in the true Old Bailey construction, made a confirmation of the latter.'

These are the particulars of Miss Harlowe's flight. Thou'lt hardly think me too minute.—How I long to triumph over thy impatience and fury on the occasion.

Let me beseech thee, my dear Lovelace, in thy next *letter*, to rave most *gloriously* !—*I shall* be grievously disappointed, if thou dost not.

Where, Lovelace, can the poor lady be gone? And who can describe the distress she must be in?

By thy former letters, it may be supposed, that she can have very little money: nor, by the suddenness of her flight, more clothes than those she had on. And thou knowest who once said *, 'her parents will not receive her: her uncles will not entertain her: her Norton is in their direction, and cannot: Miss Howe dare not. She has not one friend or intimate in town; entirely a stranger to it.' And, let me add, has been despoiled of her honour by the man for whom she made all these sacrifices; and who stood bound to her by a thousand oaths and vows, to be her husband, her protector, and friend!

How strong must be her resentment of the bar-

* See Vol. IV. p. 57.

barous treatment she has received! *How* worthy of herself, that it has made her *hate* the man she once *loved*! And rather than marry him, choose to expose her disgrace to the whole world; to forego the reconciliation with her friends which her heart was so set upon; and to hazard a thousand evils to which her youth and her sex may too probably expose an indigent and friendless beauty!

Rememberest thou not that home push upon thee, in one of the papers written in her delirium; of which however it savours not?——

I will assure thee, that I have very often since most seriously reflected upon it: and as thy intended second outrage convinces me, that it made no impression upon thee then, and perhaps thou hast never thought of it since, I will transcribe the sentence.

'If, as religion teaches us, God will judge us, in a great measure, by our benevolent or evil actions to one another—O wretch, bethink thee, in time bethink thee, how great must be thy condemnation*!'

And is this amiable doctrine the sum of religion? Upon my faith, I believe it is. For, to indulge a serious thought, since we are not Atheists, except in *practice*, does God, the BEING of Beings, want any thing of us for HIMSELF! And does he not enjoin us works of mercy to one another, as the means to obtain *his* mercy? A sublime principle, and worthy of the SUPREME SUPERINTENDENT and FATHER of all things!—But if we are to be judged by this noble principle, what, *indeed*, must be *thy* condemnation on the score of this lady only? And what *mine*, and what all our *confraternity's*, on the score of other women: though we are none of us

* See Vol. V, p. 282

half so bad as thou art, as well for want of inclination, I hope, as of opportunity!

I must add, that as well for thy *own* sake, as for the *lady's*, I wish ye were yet to be married to each other. It is the only medium that can be hit upon to salve the honour of both. All that's past may yet be concealed from the world, and from her relations; and thou mayest make amends for all her sufferings, if thou resolvest to be a tender and kind husband to her.

And if this really be thy intention, I will accept with pleasure of a commission from thee, that shall tend to promote so good an end, whenever she can be found; that is to say, if she will admit to her presence a man who professes friendship to thee. Nor can I give a greater demonstration, that I am

Thy sincere friend,

J. BELFORD.

P. S. Mabell's clothes were thrown into the passage this morning: nobody knows by whom.

LETTER XXVI.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Friday, June 30.

I AM ruined, undone, blown up, destroyed, and worse than annihilated, that's certain!—But was not the news shocking enough, dost thou think, without thy throwing into the too weighty scale reproaches, which thou couldst have had no opportunity to make but for my own voluntary communications? At a time too, when, as it falls out, I

have another very sensible disappointment to struggle with?

I imagine, if there be such a thing as future punishment, it must be none of the smallest mortifications, that a *new* devil should be punished by a worse *old one*. And, *Take that!* and, *Take that!* to have the old satyr cry to the screaming sufferer, laying on with a cat-o'nine-tails, with a star of burning brass at the end of each: and, *For what! For what!*—Why, if the truth may be fairly told, for not being so bad a devil as myself.

Thou art, surely, casuist good enough to know (what I have insisted upon * heretofore) that the sin of seducing a credulous and easy girl, is as great as that of bringing to your lure an incredulous and watchful one.

However ungenerous an appearance what I am going to say may have from *my* pen, let me tell thee, that if such a woman as Miss Harlowe chose to enter into the matrimonial state, [*I am resolved to disappoint thee in thy meditated triumph over my rage and despair!*] and, according to the old Patriarchal system, to go on contributing to get sons and daughters, with no other view than to bring them up piously, and to be good and useful members of the commonwealth, what a devil had she to do, to let her fancy run a gadding after a rake? One whom she *knew* to be a rake?

Oh, but truly she hoped to have the merit of reclaiming him. She had formed pretty notions how charming it would look to have a penitent of her own making dangling at her side to church, through an applauding neighbourhood: and, as their family increased, marching with her thither, at the head of their boys and girls, processionally as it

* See Vol. IV. p. 23.

were, boasting of the fruits of their *honest desires*, as my good lord bishop has it in his licence. And then, what a comely sight, all kneeling down together, in one pew, according to eldership, as we have seen in effigie, a whole family upon some old monument, where the honest chevalier in armour is presented kneeling, with uplift hands, and half a dozen jolter-headed crop-ear'd boys behind him, ranged *gradatim*, or step-fashion according to age and size, all in the same posture—facing his pious dame, with a ruff about her neck, and as many whey-faced girls all kneeling behind *her*: an altar between them, and an opened book upon it: over their heads semi-lunary rays darting from gilded clouds, surrounding an achievement-motto, IN COELO SALUS—or QUIES—perhaps, if they have happened to live the usual married life of brawl and contradiction.

It is certainly as much my misfortune to have fallen in with Miss Clarissa Harlowe, were I to have valued my reputation or ease, as it is that of Miss Harlowe to have been acquainted with me. And, after all, what have I done more than prosecute the maxims by which thou and I, and every rake are governed, and which, before I knew this lady, we have pursued from pretty girl to pretty girl, as fast as we have set one down taking another up;—just as the fellows do with their flying coaches and flying horses at a country fair—With a *Who rides next! Who rides next!*

But here in the present case, to carry on the volant metaphor, (for I must either be merry or mad) is a pretty little Miss, just come out of her hanging-sleeve coat, brought to buy a pretty little fairing; for the world, Jack, is but a great fair, thou knowest; and, to give thee serious reflection for serious, all its toys but tinselled hobby-horses, gilt ginger-

bread, squeaking trumpets, painted drums, and so forth.

Now behold this pretty little Miss skimming from booth to booth, in a very pretty manner. One pretty little fellow called Wyerley, perhaps; another jiggeting rascal called Biron, a third simpering varlet of the name of Symmes, and a more hideous villain than any of the rest, with a long bag under his arm, and parchment settlements tagged to his heels, ycleped Solmes; pursue her from raree-show to raree-show, shouldering upon one another at every turning, stopping when she stops, and set a spinning again when she moves. And thus dangled after, but still in the eye of her watchful guardians, traverses the pretty little Miss through the whole fair, equally delighted and delighting: till at last taken with the invitation of the *laced-hat orator*, and seeing several pretty little bib-wearers stuck together in the flying coaches, cutting safely the yielding air, in the one-go-up the other-go-down picture-of-the-world-vehicle, and all with as little fear as wit, is tempted to ride next.

In, then, suppose she slily pops, when *none of her friends are near her*; and if, after two or three ups and downs, her pretty head turns giddy, and she throws herself out of the coach when at its elevation, and so dashes out her pretty little brains, who can help it?—And would you hang the poor fellow, whose *professed trade* it was to set the pretty little creatures a flying?

'Tis true, this pretty little Miss, being a *very* pretty little Miss, being a *very much-admired* little Miss, being a very *good* little Miss, who always minded her book, and had passed through her sampler doctrine with high applause; had even stitched out in gaudy propriety of colours, an Abraham offering up Isaac, a Sampson and the Philistines,

and flowers, and knots, and trees, and the sun and the moon, and the seven stars, all hung up in frames with glasses before them, for the admiration of her future grandchildren: who likewise was entitled to a very pretty little estate: who was descended from a pretty little family upwards of one hundred years gentility; which lived in a very pretty little manner, respected a very little on their own accounts, a great deal on hers:—

For such a pretty little Miss as this to come to so great a misfortune, must be a very sad thing: but, tell me, would not the loosing of any ordinary child, of any other less considerable family, of less shining or amiable qualities, have been as great and heavy a loss to that family, as the losing this pretty little Miss could be to hers?

To descend to a very low instance, and that only as to *personality*; hast thou any doubt, that thy strong-muscled bony-face was as much admired by thy mother, as if it had been the face of a Lovelace, or any other handsome fellow? And had thy picture been drawn, would she have forgiven the painter, had he not expressed so exactly thy lineaments, as that every one should have discerned the likeness? The *handsome* likeness is all that is wished for. Ugliness made familiar to us, with the partiality natural to fond parents, will be beauty all the world over.—Do thou apply.

* * *

But, alas! Jack, all this is but a copy of my countenance, drawn to evade thy malice!—Though it answer thy unfriendly purpose to own it, I cannot forbear to own it, that I am stung to the very soul with this unhappy—*accident*, must I call it!—Have I nobody, whose throat, either for carelessness or treachery, I ought to cut, in order to pacify my vengeance?

When I reflect upon my *last* iniquitous intention, the *first* outrage so nobly resented, as well as, so far as she was able, so nobly *resisted*, I cannot but conclude, that I was under the power of fascination from these accursed Circes; who, pretending to know their own sex, would have it, that there is in every woman a yielding, or a weak-resisting moment to be met with: and that *yet*, and *yet*, and *yet*, I had not tried enough: but that, if neither love nor terror should enable me to hit that lucky moment, when, by help of their accursed arts, she was *once overcome*, she would be for *ever overcome*: appealing to all my experience, to all my knowledge of the sex, for justification of their assertion.

My appealed-to experience, I own, was but too favourable to their argument: for dost thou think, I could have held my purpose against such an angel as this, had I ever before met with a woman so much in earnest to defend her honour against the unwearied artifices and perseverance of the man she loved? Why then were there not *more* examples of a virtue so immoveable? Or, why was this singular one to fall to my lot? except indeed to *double my guilt*; and at the same time to convince all that should hear her story, *that there are angels as well as devils in the flesh?*

So much for confession; and for the sake of humouring my conscience; with a view likewise to disarm thy malice by acknowledgment: since no one shall say worse of me, than I will of myself on this occasion.

One thing I will nevertheless add, to show the sincerity of my contrition—'Tis this, that if thou canst by any means find her out within these three days, or any time before she has discovered the stories relating to Captain Tomlinson and her uncle to be what they are; and if thou canst prevail

upon her to consent, I will actually, in thy presence and his (he to represent her uncle) marry her.

I am still in hopes it may be so—she cannot be long concealed—I have already set all engines at work to find her out! and if I do, what *indifferent* persons [and no one of her *friends*, as thou observest, will look upon her] will care to embroil themselves with a man of my figure, fortune, and resolution? Show her this part, then, or any other part of this letter, at thy own discretion, if thou *canst* find her: for, after all, methinks, I would be glad that this affair, which is bad enough in itself, should go off without worse personal consequences to any body else; and yet it runs in my mind, I know not why, that sooner or later it will draw a few drops of blood after it; except she and I can make it up between ourselves. And this may be another reason why she should not carry her resentment too far—not that such an affair would give me much concern neither, were I to choose my man or men, for I heartily hate all her family, but herself; and ever shall.

* * *

Let me add, that the lady's plot to escape appears to me no extraordinary one. There was much more luck than probability that it should do; since, to make it succeed, it was necessary that Dorcas and Will, and Sinclair and her nymphs, should be all deceived, or off their guard. It belongs to me, when I see them, to give them my hearty thanks that they were; and that their selfish care to provide for their own future security, should induce them to leave their outward door upon their bolt-latch, and be curs'd to them.

Mabell deserves a pitch suit and a bonfire, rather than the lustring; and as her clothes are returned, let the lady's be put to her others, to be

sent to her when it can be told whither—but not till I give the word neither; for we must get the dear fugitive back again if possible.

I suppose that my stupid villain, who knew not such a goddess-shaped lady with a mien so noble, from the awkward and bent-shouldered Mabell, has been at Hampstead to see after her. And yet I hardly think she would go thither. He ought to go through every street where bills for lodgings are up, to inquire after a new comer. The houses of such as deal in women's matters, and tea, coffee, and such-like, are those to be inquired at for her. If some tidings be not quickly heard of her, I would not have either Dorcas, Will, or Mabell, appear in my sight, whatever their superiors think fit to do.

This, though written in character, is a very long letter, considering it is not a narrative one, or a journal of proceedings, like most of my former; for such will unavoidably and naturally, as I may say, run into length. But I have so used myself to write a great deal of late, that I know not how to help it. Yet I must add to its length, in order to explain myself on a hint I gave at the beginning of it; which was, that I have another disappointment, besides this of Miss Harlowe's escape, to bemoan.

And what dost think it is? Why the old peer, *pox* of his tough constitution, (for that malady would have helped him on) has made shift by fire and brimstone, and the devil knows what, to force the gout to quit the counterscarp of his stomach, just as it had collected all its strength, in order to storm the citadel of his heart. In short, they have, by the mere force of stink-pots, hand-granades, and pop-guns, driven the slow-working pioneer quite out of the trunk into the extremities; and there it lies nibbling and gnawing upon his great

toe; when I had hoped a fair end of the distemper and the distempered.

But I, who could write to *thee* of laudanum, and the wet cloth, formerly, yet let 10,000*l.* a year slip through my fingers, when I had entered upon it more than in imagination, [for I had begun to ask the stewards questions, and to hear them talk of fines and renewals, and such sort of stuff,] *deserve* to be mortified.

Thou canst not imagine, how differently the servants, and even my cousins, look upon me, since yesterday, to what they did before. Neither the one nor the other bow or curtesy half so low—nor am I a quarter so often *his honour* and *your honour*, as I was within these few hours, with the former: and as to the latter—it is *cousin* again, with the usual familiarity, instead of *sir*, and *sir*, and, *if you please, Mr. Lovelace.* And now they have the insolence to congratulate me on the recovery of the *best of uncles*; while I am forced to seem as much delighted as they, when, would it do me good, I could sit down and cry my eyes out.

I had bespoke my mourning in imagination, after the example of a certain foreign minister, who, before the death, or even last illness, of Charles II. as honest White Kennet tells us, had half exhausted Blackwell Hall of its sables—an indication, as the historian would insinuate, that the monarch was to be poisoned, and the ambassador in the secret.—And yet, fool that I was, I could not take the hint—what the devil does a man read history for, if he cannot profit by the examples he find in it?

But thus, Jack, is an observation of the old peer's verified, *that one misfortune seldom comes alone*: and so concludes

Thy doubly mortified

LOVELACE.

LETTER XXVII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Wednesday night, June 28.

O MY DEAREST MISS HOWE!

ONCE more have I escaped—but, alas! I, my *best self*, have *not* escaped!—Oh! your poor Clarissa Harlowe! *You* also will hate me, I fear!—

Yet you won't, when you know all!

But no more of myself! My *lost* self. You that can rise in a morning to be blessed, and to bless; and go to rest delighted with your own reflections, and in your unbroken, unstarting slumbers, conversing with saints and angels, the former only more pure than yourself, as they have shaken off the encumbrance of body; you shall be my subject as you have long, long been my only pleasure. And let me, at awful distance, revere my beloved Anna Howe, and in her reflect upon what her Clarissa Harlowe once was!

* * *

FORGIVE, O forgive my rambling. My peace is destroyed. My intellects are touched. And what flighty nonsense must you read, if you now will vouchsafe to correspond with me, as formerly!

O my best, my dearest, my *only* friend! What a tale have I to unfold!—But still upon *self*, this vile, this hated *self*!—I will shake it off, if possible! and why should I not, since I think, except one wretch, I hate nothing so much? Self, then, be banished from *self* one moment, (for I doubt it *will* for no longer) to inquire after a *dearer* object, my beloved Anna Howe!—Whose mind, all robed in spotless white, charms and irradiates—but what would I say?—

* * *

And how, my dearest friend, after this rhapsody, which on re-perusal I would not let go, but to show you what a distracted mind dictates to my trembling pen! *How do you!* You have been very ill, it seems. That you are *recovered,* my dear, let me hear. That your mother is well, pray let me hear, and hear quickly. This comfort surely is owing to me; for if life is no *worse* than chequer work, I must now have a little white to come, having seen nothing but black, all unchequered dismal black, for a great, great while.

* * *

And what is all this wild incoherence for? It is only to beg to know how you have been, and how you now do, by a line directed for Mrs. Rachel Clark, at Mr. Smith's, a glove-shop, in King Street, Covent Garden; which (although my abode is a secret to every body else) will reach the hands of —*Your unhappy*—but that's not enough——

Your miserable

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XXVIII.

MRS. HOWE TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Superscribed, as directed in the preceding.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, Friday, June 30.

You will wonder to receive a letter from me. I am sorry for the great distress you seem to be in, such a hopeful young lady as you were! But see what comes of disobedience to parents!

For my part: although I pity you, yet I much more pity your poor father and mother. Such education as they gave you! such improvement as you

made! and such delight as they took in you!— And all come to this!—

But pray, miss, don't make my Nancy guilty of your fault; which is that of disobedience. I have charged her over and over not to correspond with one who has made such a giddy step. It is not to her reputation, I am sure. You *knew* that I so charged her; yet you go on corresponding together, to my very great vexation; for she has been very perverse upon it more than once. *Evil communication*, miss, you know the rest.

Here, people cannot be unhappy by themselves, but they must involve their friends and acquaintance whose discretion has kept them clear of their errors, into near as much unhappiness as if they had run into the like of their own heads! Thus my poor daughter is always in tears and grief; and she has postponed her own felicity, truly, because *you* are unhappy.

If people, who seek their own ruin, could be the only sufferers by their headstrong doings, it were something: but, O miss, miss! what have *you* to answer for, who have made as many grieved hearts as have known you! The whole sex is indeed wounded by you: for, who but Miss Clarissa Harlowe was proposed by every father and mother for a pattern for their daughters?

I write a long letter, where I purposed to say but a few words: and those to forbid your writing to my Nancy; and this as well because of the false step you have made, as because it will grieve her poor heart, and do you no good. If you love her, therefore write not to her. Your sad letter came into my hands, Nancy being abroad: and I shall not show it her: for there will be no comfort for her, if she saw it, nor for me, whose delight she is —as you once was to your parents.—

a truly broken spirit, if it be not already broken enough, and then to take to his mercy,

The unhappy

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Two favours, good madam, I have to beg of you.—The first;—that you will not let any of my relations know that you have heard from me. The other;—that no living creature be apprised where I am to be heard of, or directed to. This is a point that concerns me, more than I can express.—In short, my preservation from further evils may depend upon it.

LETTER XXX.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO HANNAH BURTON.

MY GOOD HANNAH, Thursday, June 29.

STRANGE things have happened to me, since you were dismissed my service (so sorely against my will) and your pert fellow-servant set over me. But that must be all forgotten now—

How do you, my Hannah? are you recovered of your illness? if you are, do you choose to come and be with me? Or *can* you conveniently?

I am a very unhappy creature, and, being among all strangers, should be glad to have *you* with me, of whose fidelity and love I have had so many acceptable instances.

Living or dying, I will endeavour to make it worth your while, my Hannah.

If you are recovered, as I hope, and if you have a good place, it may be they would bear with your absence, and suffer somebody in your room *for a*

month or so: and, by that time, I hope to be provided for, and you may then return to your place.

Don't let any of my friends know of this my desire; whether you can come or not.

I am at Mr. Smith's, a hosier's and glove-shop, in King Street, Covent Garden.

You must direct to me by the name of Rachael Clark.

Do, my good Hannah, come if you can to your poor young mistress, who always valued you, and always will whether you come or not.

I send this to your mother at St. Alban's, not knowing where to direct to you. Return me a line, that I may know what to depend upon; and I shall see you have not forgotten the pretty hand you were taught, in happy days, by

Your true friend

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XXXI.

HANNAH BURTON. IN ANSWER.

HONORED MADDAM, Monday, July 3.

I HAVE not forgot to write, and never will forget any thing you, my dear young lady, was so good as to larn *me*. I am very sorrowful for your misfortens, my dearest young lady; so sorrowfull, I do not know what to do. Gladd at harte would I be to be able to come to you. But indeed I have not been able to stir out of my rome here at my mother's ever since I was forsed to leave my plase with a roomatise, which has made me quite and clene helpless. I will pray for you night and day, my dearest, my kindest, my goodest young lady, who have been so badly used; and I am very sorry

But you seem to be sensible enough of your errors now.—So are all giddy girls, when it is too late: and what a crest-fallen figure then do the consequences of their self-willed obstinacy and headstrongedness compel them to make!

I may say too much: only as I think it proper to bear that testimony against your rashness which it behoves every careful parent to bear: and none more than

Your compassionating well-wisher,

ANNABELLA HOWE.

I send this by a special messenger, who has business only as far as Barnet, because you shall have no need to write again: knowing how you love writing: and knowing likewise, *that misfortunes make people plaintive.*

LETTER XXIX.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MRS. HOWE.

Saturday, July 1.

PERMIT me, madam, to trouble you with a few lines, were it only to thank you for your reproofs; which have nevertheless drawn fresh streams of blood from a bleeding heart.

My story is a dismal story. It has circumstances in it that would engage pity, and possibly a judgment not altogether unfavourable, were those circumstances known. But it is my business, and shall be all my business, to repent of my failings, and not endeavour to extenuate them.

Nor will I seek to distress your worthy mind. If *I cannot suffer alone*, I will make as few parties as I can in my sufferings. And, indeed, I took up my

pen with this resolution when I wrote the letter which has fallen into your hands. It was only to know, and that for a very particular reason, as well as for affection unbounded, if my dear Miss Howe, from whom I had not heard of a long time, were ill; as I had been told she was; and if so, how she now does. But my injuries being recent, and my distresses having been exceeding great, *self* would crowd into my letter. When distressed, the human mind is apt to turn itself to every one in whom it imagined or wished an interest, for pity and consolation.—Or, to express myself better, and more concisely in your own words, *misfortune makes people plaintive:* and to whom, if not to a friend, can the afflicted complain?

Miss Howe being abroad when my letter came, I flatter myself that she is recovered. But it would be some satisfaction to me to be informed if she *has been ill.* Another line from your hand would be too great a favour: but, if you will be pleased to direct any servant to answer *yes,* or *no,* to that question, I will not be further troublesome.

Nevertheless, I must declare, that my Miss Howe's friendship was all the comfort I had, or expected to have in this world; and a line from her would have been a cordial to my fainting heart. Judge then, dearest madam, how reluctantly I must obey your prohibition—but yet I will endeavour to obey it; although I should have hoped, as well from the tenor of all that has passed between Miss Howe and me, as from *her* established virtue, that she could not be tainted by *evil communication,* had one or two letters been permitted. This, however, I ask not for, since I think I have nothing to do, but to beg of God (who, I hope, has not yet withdrawn his grace from me, although he is pleased to let loose his justice upon my faults) to give me

I cannot come to do you love and sarvice; which will ever be in the harte of mee to do, if it was in my power: who am

Your most dutifull servant to command,

HANNAH BURTON.

LETTER XXXII.

MISS CL. HARLOWE TO MRS. JUDITH NORTON.

MY DEAR MRS. NORTON, Thursday, June 29.

I ADDRESS myself to you after a very long silence, (which, however, was not owing either to want of love or duty) principally to desire you to satisfy me in two or three points, which it behoves me to know.

My father and all the family, I am informed, are to be at my uncle Harlowe's this day as usual. Pray acquaint me, if they *have* been there? And if they were cheerful on the anniversary occasion? And also, if you have heard of any journey or intended journey, of my brother, in company with Captain Singleton and Mr. Solmes?

Strange things have happened to me, my dear, worthy, and maternal friend—very strange things!—Mr. Lovelace has proved a very barbarous and ungrateful man to me. But, God be praised, I have escaped from him. Being among absolute strangers (though I think worthy folks) I have written to Hannah Burton to come and be with me. If the good creature fall in your way, pray encourage her to come to me. I always intended to have her, she knows: but hoped to be in happier circumstances.

Say nothing to any of my friends that you have heard from me.

Pray—do you think my father would be prevailed upon, if I were to supplicate him by letter, to take off the heavy curse he laid upon me at my going from Harlowe Place? I can expect no other favour from him: but that being literally fulfilled as to my prospects in this life, I hope it will be thought to have operated far enough; and my heart is *so* weak!—it is *very* weak!—But for my father's *own* sake—what *should* I say!—Indeed I hardly know how I *ought* to express myself on this sad subject!—But it will give ease to my mind to be released from it.

I am afraid *my poor*, as I used to call the good creatures to whose necessities I was wont to administer by your faithful hands, have missed me of late. But now, alas! I am poor myself. It is not the least aggravation of my fault, nor of my regrets, that with such inclinations as God had given me, I have put it out of my power to do the good I once pleased myself to think I was born to do. It is a sad thing, my dearest Mrs. Norton, to render useless to ourselves and the world, by our own rashness, the talents which Providence has entrusted to us, for the service of both.

But these reflections are now too late; and perhaps I ought to have kept them to myself. Let me however hope, that you love me still. Pray let me hope that you do. And then, notwithstanding my misfortunes, which have made me seem ungrateful to the kind and truly maternal pains you have taken with me from my cradle, I shall have the happiness to think that there is *one* worthy person, who hates not

The unfortunate

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Pray remember me to my foster-brother. I hope he continues dutiful and good to you.

Be pleased to direct for Rachel Clark, at Mr. Smith's, in King Street, Covent Garden. But keep the direction an absolute secret.

LETTER XXXIII.

MRS. NORTON. IN ANSWER.

Saturday, July 1.

YOUR letter, my dearest young lady, cuts me to the heart! Why will you not let me know all your distresses?—Yet you have said enough!

My son is very good to me. A few hours ago he was taken with a feverish disorder. But I hope it will go off happily, if his ardour for business will give him the recess from it which his good master is willing to allow him. He presents his duty to you, and shed tears at hearing your sad letter read.

You have been misinformed as to your family's being at your uncle Harlowe's. They did not intend to be there. Nor was the day kept at all. Indeed, they have not stirred out, but to church, (and that but three times) ever since the day you went away.—Unhappy day for them, and for all who know you!—To me, I am sure, most particularly so!—My heart now bleeds more and more for you.

I have not heard a syllable of such a journey as you mention of your brother, Captain Singleton, and Mr. Solmes. There has been some talk indeed of your brother's setting out for his northern estates: but I have not heard of it lately.

I am afraid no letter will be received from you. It grieves me to tell you so, my dearest young lady. No evil can have happened to you which they do

not *expect* to hear of: so great is their antipathy to the wicked man, and so bad is his character.

I cannot but think hardly of their unforgiveness: but there is no judging for others by one's self. Nevertheless I will add, that, if you had had as gentle spirits to deal with as your own, or I will be bold to say, as mine, these evils had never happened either to them or to you. I knew your virtue, and your love of virtue, from your very cradle; and I doubted not but *that*, with God's grace, would always be your guard. But you could never be driven; nor was there occasion to drive you—so generous, so noble, so discreet—but how does my love of your amiable qualities increase my affliction; as these recollections must do yours!

You are escaped, my dearest miss—happily, I hope—that is to say, with your honour—else, how great must be your distress!—Yet from your letter I dread the worst.

I am very seldom at Harlowe Place. The house is not the house it used to be, since you went from it. Then they are *so* relentless! And, as I cannot say harsh things of the beloved child of my *heart*, as well as *bosom*, they do not take it *amiss* that I stay away.

Your Hannah left her place ill some time ago; and, as she is still at her mother's at St. Alban's, I am afraid she continues ill. If so, as you are among strangers, and I cannot encourage you at present to come into *these* parts, I shall think it my duty to attend you (let it it be taken as it will) as soon as my Tommy's indisposition will permit; which I hope will be soon.

I have a little money by me. You say *you are poor yourself*—how grievous are those words from one entitled and accustomed to affluence!—Will you be so good to command it, my beloved young

lady?—It is most of it your own bounty to me. And I should take a pride to restore it to its original owner.

Your poor bless you, and pray for you continually. I have so managed your last benevolence, and they have been so healthy, and have had such constant employ, that it has held out; and will hold out, till the happier times return which I continually pray for.

Let me beg of you my dearest young lady, to take to yourself all those aids, which good persons, like you, draw from RELIGION, in support of their calamities. Let your sufferings be what they will, I am sure you have been innocent in your intention. So do not despond. None are made to suffer above what they *can*, and therefore *ought* to bear.

We know not the methods of Providence, nor what wise ends it may have to serve in its seemingly severe dispensations to its poor creatures.

Few persons have greater reason to say this than myself. And since we are apt in calamities to draw more comfort from example than precept, you will permit me to remind you of my own lot: for who has had a greater share of afflictions than myself?

To say nothing of the loss of an excellent mother, at a time of life when motherly care is most wanted, the death of a dear father, who was an ornament to his cloth, (and who had qualified me to be his scribe and amanuensis) just as he came within view of a preferment which would have made his family easy, threw me friendless into the wide world; threw me upon a very careless, and, which was much worse, a very unkind husband. Poor man!—But he was spared long enough, thank God, in a tedious illness, to repent of his neglected opportunities, and his light principles; which I

have always thought of with pleasure, although I was left the more destitute for his chargeable illness, and ready to be brought to bed, when he died, of my Tommy.

But this very circumstance, which I thought the unhappiest that I could have been left in, (so short-sighted is human prudence!) became the happy means of recommending me to your mother, who, in regard to my character, and in compassion to my very destitute circumstances, permitted me, as I made a conscience of not parting with my poor boy, to nurse both you and him, born within a few days of each other. And I have never since wanted any of the humble blessings which God has made me contented with.

Nor have I known what a very great grief was, from the day of my poor husband's death, till the day that your parents told me how much they were determined that you should have Mr. Solmes; when I was apprised not only of your aversion to him, but how unworthy he was of you; for then I began to dread the consequences of forcing so generous a spirit; and, till then, I never feared Mr. Lovelace, attracting as was his person, and specious his manners and address. For I was sure you would never have him, if he gave you not good reason to be convinced of his reformation: nor till your friends were as well satisfied in it as yourself. But that unhappy misunderstanding between your brother and Mr. Lovelace, and their joining so violently to force you upon Mr. Solmes, did all that mischief, which has cost you and them so dear, and poor me all my peace! O what has not this ungrateful, this doubly-guilty man to answer for!

Nevertheless you know not what God has in store for you yet!—But if you are to be punished all your days here, for example sake, in a case of such

importance, for your one false step, be pleased to consider, that this life is but a state of probation; and if you have your purification in it, you will be the more happy. Nor doubt I, that you will have the higher reward *hereafter* for submitting to the will of Providence *here*, with patience and resignation.

You see, my dearest Miss Clary, that I make no scruple to call the step you took a false one. In *you* it was less excusable than it would have been in any other young lady; not only because of your superior talents, but because of the opposition between *your* character and *his*: so that if you had been provoked to quit your father's house, it needed not to have been with him. Nor needed I, indeed, but as an instance of my *impartial* love, to have written this to you *.

After this, it will have an unkind, and perhaps at this time an unseasonable appearance, to express my concern, that you have not before favoured me with a line. Yet if you can account to yourself for your silence, I dare say, I ought to be satisfied; for I am sure you love me: as I both love and honour you, and ever will, and the more for your misfortunes.

One consolation, methinks, I have, even when I am sorrowing for your calamities; and that is, that I know not any young person so qualified to shine the brighter for the trials she may be exercised with: and yet it is a consolation that ends in adding to my regrets for your afflictions, because you

* Mrs. Norton having only the family representation and invectives to form her judgment upon, knew not that Clarissa had determined against going off with Mr. Lovelace; nor how solicitous she had been to procure for herself *any other* protection than his, when she apprehended, that if she staid, she had no way to avoid being married to Mr. Solmes.

are blessed with a mind so well able to bear prosperity, and to make every body round you the better for it!—*Woe unto him!*—O this wretched, wretched man!—But I will forbear till I know more.

'Ruminating on every thing your melancholy letter suggests, and apprehending from the gentleness of your mind, the amiableness of your person, and your youth, the further misfortunes and inconveniences to which you may possibly be subjected; I cannot conclude without asking for your leave to attend you, and that in a very earnest manner—and I beg of you not to deny me, on any consideration relating to *myself*, or even to the indisposition of my *other* beloved child; if I can be either of use or comfort to you. Were it, my dearest young lady, but for two or three days, permit me to attend you, although my son's illness should increase, and compel me to come down again at the end of those two or three days.—I repeat my request likewise, that you will command from me the little sum remaining in my hands of your bounty to your poor, as well as that dispensed to

Your ever affectionate and faithful servant,

JUDITH NORTON.

LETTER XXXIV.

MISS CL. HARLOWE TO LADY BETTY LAWRANCE.

MADAM, Thursday, June 29.

I HOPE you will excuse the freedom of this address, from one who has not the honour to be personally known to you, although you must have heard much of Clarissa Harlowe. It it only to beg the favour of a line from your ladyship's hand (by the

next post, if convenient) in answer to the following questions:

1. Whether you wrote a letter, dated, as I have a memorandum, Wedn. June 7. congratulating your nephew Lovelace on his supposed nuptials, as reported to you by Mr. Spurrier, your ladyship's steward, as from one Captain Tomlinson:—and in it reproaching Mr. Lovelace, as guilty of slight, &c. in not having acquainted your ladyship and the family with his marriage?
2. Whether your ladyship wrote to Miss Montague to meet you at Reading, in order to attend you to your cousin Leeson's in Albemarle Street; on your being obliged to be in town on your *old chancery-affair*, I remember are the words? and whether you bespoke your nephew's attendance there on Sunday night the 11th?
3. Whether your ladyship and Miss Montague *did* come to town at that time; and whether you went to Hampstead on Monday, in a hired coach and four, your own being repairing, and took from thence to town the young creature whom you visited there?

Your ladyship will probably guess, that these questions are not asked for reasons favourable to your nephew Lovelace. But be the answer what it will, it can do *him* no hurt, nor me any good; only that I think I owe it to my former hopes (however deceived in them) and even to charity, that a person, of whom I was once willing to think better, should not prove so egregiously abandoned, as to be wanting, in *every* instance, to that veracity which is an indispensable in the character of a gentleman.

Be pleased, madam, to direct to me (keeping the

direction secret for the present) to be left at the Belle Savage on Ludgate Hill, till called for. I am

Your ladyship's most humble servant,

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XXXV.

LADY BETTY LAWRANCE TO MISS CL. HARLOWE.

DEAR MADAM, Saturday, July 1.

I FIND that all is not as it should be between you and my nephew Lovelace. It will very much afflict me, and all his friends, if he has been guilty of any designed baseness to a lady of your character and merit.

We have been long in expectation of an opportunity to congratulate you and ourselves upon an event most earnestly wished for by us all; since all our hopes of *him* are built upon the power *you* have over him: for if ever man adored a woman, he is that man, and you, madam, are that woman.

Miss Montague, in her last letter to me, in answer to one of mine, inquiring if she knew from him whether he could call you his, or was likely soon to have that honour, has these words: 'I know not what to make of my cousin Lovelace, as to the point your ladyship is so earnest about. He sometimes says, he is actually married to Miss Cl. Harlowe: at other times, that it is her own fault if he be not.—He speaks of her, not only with love, but with reverence; yet owns, that there is a misunderstanding between them; but confesses that she is wholly faultless. An angel, and not a woman, he says she is: and that no man living can be worthy of her.'—

This is what my niece Montague writes.

God grant, my dearest young lady, that he may not have so heinously offended you, that you *cannot* forgive him! If you are not already married, and refuse to be his, I shall lose all hopes that he ever will marry, or be the man I wish him to be. So will Lord M. So will Lady Sarah Sadleir.

I will now answer your questions: but indeed I hardly know what to write, for fear of widening still more the unhappy difference between you. But yet such a young lady must command every thing from me. This then is my answer.

I wrote not any letter to him on or about the 7th of June.

Neither I nor my steward know such a man as Capt. Tomlinson.

I wrote not to my niece to meet me at Reading, nor to accompany me to my cousin Leeson's in town.

My chancery-affair, though like most chancery-affairs, it be of long standing, is nevertheless now in so good a way, that it cannot give me occasion to go to town.

Nor have I been in town these six months: nor at Hampstead for several years.

Neither shall I have any temptation to go to town, except to pay my congratulatory compliments to Mrs. Lovelace. On which occasion I should go with the greatest pleasure; and should hope for the favour of your accompanying me to Glenham Hall, for a month at least.

Be what will the reason of your inquiry, let me entreat you, my dear young lady, for Lord M.'s sake; for my sake; for this giddy man's sake, soul as well as body; and for all our family's sakes; not to suffer this answer to widen differences so far as to make you refuse him, if he already has not

the honour of calling you his; as I am apprehensive he has not, by your signing by your family-name.

And here let me offer to you my mediation to compose the difference between you, be it what it will. Your cause, my dear young lady, cannot be put into the hands of any body living more devoted to your service, than into those of

Your sincere admirer, and humble servant,

ELIZ. LAWRANCE.

LETTER XXXVI.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MRS. HODGES.

MRS. HODGES, Enfield, June 29.

I AM under a kind of necessity to write to you, having no one among my relations, to whom I dare write, or hope a line from if I did. It is but to answer a question. It is this:

Whether you know such a man as Capt. Tomlinson? And if you do, whether he be intimate with my uncle Harlowe?

I will describe his person, lest, possibly, he should go by another name among you; although I know not why he should.

'He is a thin, tallish man, a little pock-fretten; of a sallowish complexion. Fifty years of age, or more. Of a good aspect when he looks up. He seems to be a serious man, and one who knows the world. He stoops a little in the shoulders. Is of Berkshire. His wife is of Oxfordshire; and has several children. He removed lately into your parts from Northamptonshire.'

I must desire you, Mrs. Hodges, that you will

not let my uncle, nor any of my relations, know that I write to you.

You used to say, that you would be glad to have it in your power to serve me. That, indeed, was in my prosperity. But I dare say, you will not refuse me in a particular that will oblige me, without hurting yourself.

I understand, that my father, mother, and sister, and I presume, my brother, and my uncle Antony, are to be at my uncle Harlowe's this day. God preserve them all, and may they rejoice in many happy birth-days! You will write six words to me concerning their healths.

Direct, for a particular reason, to Mrs. Dorothy Salcomb, to be left till called for, at the Four Swans Inn, Bishopsgate Street.

You know my hand-writing well enough, were not the contents of the letter sufficient to excuse my name, or any other subscription, than that of,

Your friend.

LETTER XXXVII.

MRS. HODGES. IN ANSWER.

MADDAM, Sat. July 2.

I RETURN you an anser, as you wish me to doe. Master is acquented with no sitch man. I am shure no sitch ever came to our house. And master sturs very little out. He has no harte to stur out. For why? Your obstinacy makes um not care to see one another. Master's birth-day was never kept soe before: for not a sole here; and nothing but sikeing and sorrowin from master to think how it yused to bee.

I axed master, if soe bee he knowed sitch a man

as one Captain Tomlinson? But said not whirfore I axed. He sed no, not he.

Shure this is no trix nor forgary bruing against master by one Tomlinson—won knows not what cumpany you may have been forsed to keep, sen you went away, you knoe, maddam. Excuse me, maddam; but Lundon is a pestilent plase; and that Squire Luveless is a devil (for all he is sitch a like gentleman to looke to) as I hev heard every boddy say; and think as how you have found by thiss.

I truste, maddam, you wulde not let master cum to harme, if you knoed it, by any body who may pretend to be acquented with him: but for fere, I querid with myself if I shulde not tell him. But I was willin to show you, that I wulde plessure you in advarsity, if advarsity be your lott, as well as prosperity; for I am none of those that woulde doe otherwiss. Soe no more from

Your humble sarvant, to wish you well,

SARAH HODGES.

LETTER XXXVIII.

MISS CL. HARLOWE TO LADY BETTY LAWRANCE.

MADAM, Monday, July 3.

I CANNOT excuse myself from giving your ladyship this one trouble more; to thank you, as I most heartily do, for your kind letter.

I must own to you, madam, that the honour of being related to ladies as eminent for their virtue, as for their descent, was at first no small inducement with me to lend an ear to Mr. Lovelace's address. And the rather, as I was determined, had it come to effect, to do every thing in my power to deserve your favourable opinion.

I had another motive, which I knew would of itself give me merit with your whole family; a presumptuous one, (a punishably presumptuous one as it has proved) in the hope that I might be an humble means in the hand of Providence to reclaim a man, who had, as I thought, good sense enough at bottom to be reclaimed; or at least gratitude enough to acknowledge the intended obligation, whether the generous hope were to succeed or not.

But I have been most egregiously mistaken in Mr. Lovelace; the only man, I persuade myself, pretending to be a gentleman, in whom I could have been so *much* mistaken: for while I was endeavouring to save a drowning wretch, I have been, not accidentally, but premeditatedly, and of set purpose, drawn in after him. And he has had the glory to add to the list of those he has ruined, a name, that, I will be bold to say, would not have disparaged his own. And this, madam, by means that would shock humanity to be made acquainted with.

My whole end is served by your ladyship's answer to the questions I took the liberty to put to you in writing. Nor have I a wish to make the unhappy man more odious to you, than is necessary to excuse myself for absolutely declining your offered mediation.

When your ladyship shall be informed of the following particulars:

That, after he had compulsatorily, as I may say, tricked me into the act of going off with him, he could carry me to one of the vilest houses, as it proved, in London.

That he could be guilty of a wicked attempt, in resentment of which, I found means to escape from him to Hampstead:

That, after he had found me out there, (I know not how) he could procure two women, dressed out richly, to personate your ladyship and Miss Montague; who, under pretence of engaging me to make a visit in town to your cousin Leeson, (promising to return with me that evening to Hampstead) betrayed me back again to the vile house; where, again made a prisoner, I was first robbed of my senses; and then of my honour.—Why should I seek to conceal that disgrace from others, which I cannot hide from myself?

When your ladyship shall know, that, in the shocking progress to this ruin, wilful falsehoods, repeated forgeries, (particularly of one letter from your ladyship, another from Miss Montague, and a third from Lord M.) and numberless perjuries, were not the least of his crimes: you will judge, that I can have no principles that will make me worthy of an alliance with ladies of yours and your noble sister's character, if I could not from my soul declare, that such an alliance can never *now* take place.

I will not offer to clear myself entirely of blame: but, as to *him*, I have no fault to accuse myself of. My crime was, the corresponding with him at first, when prohibited so to do by those who had a right to my obedience; made still more inexcusable, by giving him a clandestine meeting, which put me into the power of his arts. And for this, I am content to be punished: thankful, that at last I have escaped from him: and have it in my power to reject so wicked a man for my husband: and glad, if I may be a warning, since I cannot be an example: which once (very vain, and very conceited as I was) I proposed to myself to be.

All the ill I wish him is, that he may reform; and that I may be the last victim to his baseness.

Perhaps this desirable wish may be obtained, when he shall see how his wickedness, his unmerited wickedness! to a poor creature, made friendless by his cruel arts, will end.

I conclude with my humble thanks to your ladyship, for your favourable opinion of me; and with the assurance, that I will be, while life is lent me,

Your ladyship's grateful and obliged servant,

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XXXIX.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MRS. NORTON.

Sunday evening, July 2.

How kindly, my beloved Mrs. Norton, do you sooth the anguish of a bleeding heart! Surely you are my own mother: and by some unaccountable mistake, I must have been laid to a family, that having newly found out, or at least suspected the imposture, cast me from their hearts, with the indignation that such a discovery will warrant.

O that I had been indeed your own child, born to partake of your humble fortunes, an heiress only to that content in which you are so happy! Then should I have had a *truly* gentle spirit to have guided my ductile heart, which force and ungenerous usage sit so ill upon: and nothing of what has happened would have been.

But let me take heed, that I enlarge not, by impatience, the breach already made in my duty by my rashness! since had I not erred, my mother, at least, could never have been thought hard hearted and unforgiving. Am I not then answerable, not only for my own faults, but for the consequences of them; which tend to depreciate and bring dis-

grace upon a maternal character, never before called in question?

It is kind however in you, to endeavour to extenuate the fault of one so greatly sensible of it: and could it be wiped off entirely, it would render me more worthy of the pains you have taken in my education: for it must add to your grief, as it does to my confusion, that after such promising beginnings, I should have so behaved, as to be a disgrace instead of a credit to you and my other friends.

But that I may not make you think me more guilty than I am, give me leave briefly to assure you, that when my story is known, I shall be entitled to more compassion than blame, even on the score of going away with Mr. Lovelace.

As to all that happened afterwards, let me only say, that although I must call myself a lost creature as to this world, yet I have this consolation left me, that I have not suffered either for want of circumspection, or through credulity, or weakness. Not one moment was I off my guard, or unmindful of your early precepts. But (having been enabled to baffle many base contrivances) I was at last ruined by arts the most inhuman. But had I not been rejected by every friend, this low-hearted man had not dared, nor would have had an opportunity, to treat me as he has treated me.

More I cannot, at this time, nor need I, say: and this I desire you to keep to yourself, lest resentments should be taken up when I am gone, that may spread the evil which I hope will end with me.

I have been misinformed, you say, as to my principal relations being at my uncle Harlowe's. The day, you say, was not kept. Nor have my brother and Mr. Solmes—astonishing!—What com-

plicated wickedness has this wretched man to answer for!—Were I to tell you, you would hardly believe there could have been such a heart in man.—But one day you may know my whole story!—At present I have neither inclination nor words—O my bursting heart!—Yet a happy, a wished relief—were you present my tears would supply the rest!

* * *

I RESUME my pen.

And so you fear no letter will be received from me? But DON'T *grieve to tell me so!* I expect every thing bad—and such is my distress, that had you not bid me hope for mercy from the throne of mercy, I should have been afraid that my father's dreadful curse would be completed with regard to both worlds.

For here, an additional misfortune;—in a fit of frensical heedlessness, I sent a letter to my beloved Miss Howe, without recollecting her private address; and it has fallen into her angry mother's hands: and so that dear friend perhaps has a-new incurred displeasure on my account. And here too your worthy son is ill; and my poor Hannah, you think, cannot come to me—O my dear Mrs. Norton, *will* you, *can* you censure *those* whose resentments against me heaven seems to approve of; and will you acquit *her* whom *that* condemns?

Yet you bid me not despond.—I will not, if I can help it. And, indeed, most seasonable consolation has your kind letter afforded me.—Yet to God Almighty do I appeal, to avenge my wrongs, and vindicate my inno——

But hushed be my stormy passions!—Have I not but this moment said that your letter gave me consolation?—May *those* be forgiven, who hinder my father from forgiving *me!*—And this, as to *them*,

shall be the harshest thing that shall drop from my pen.

But although your son should recover, I charge you, my dear Mrs. Norton, that you do not think of coming to me. I don't know still, but your mediation with my mother (although at present your interposition would be so little attended to) may be of use to procure me the revocation of that most dreadful part of my father's curse, which only remains to be fulfilled. The voice of nature must at last be heard in my favour, surely. It will only plead at first to my friends in the still, conscious plaintiveness of a young and unhardened beggar. But it will grow more clamorous when I have the courage to be so, and shall demand, perhaps, the paternal protection from *further* ruin; and that forgiveness, which those will be little entitled to expect, for their own faults, who shall interpose to have it refused to me; for an *accidental*, not a *premeditated* error: and which, but from them, I had never fallen into.

But again impatiency, founded perhaps on self-partiality, that strange misleader! prevails.

Let me briefly say, that it is necessary to my present and future hopes, that you keep well with my family. And moreover, should you come, I may be traced out by that means by the most abandoned of men. Say not then, that you think you ought to come up to me, *let it be taken as it will*:—for *my sake* let me repeat (were my foster-brother recovered, as I hope he is) you must *not* come. Nor can I want your advice, while *I* can write, and *you* can answer me. And write I will as often as I stand in need of your counsel.

Then the people I am now with seem to be both honest and humane: and there is in the same house a widow-lodger, of low fortunes, but of great me-

rit:—almost such another serious and good woman, as the dear one to whom I am now writing; who has, as she says, given over all other thoughts of the world, but such as shall assist her to leave it happily.—How suitable to my own views!—There seems to be a comfortable providence in *this* at least—so that at present there is nothing of exigence; nothing that can *require* or even *excuse*, your coming, when so many better ends may be answered by your staying where you are. A time may come, when I shall want your last and best assistance: and *then*, my dear Mrs. Norton—and *then*, I will bespeak it, and embrace it with my whole heart—and *then*, will it not be denied me by any body.

You are very obliging in your offer of money. But although I was forced to leave my clothes behind me, yet I took several things of value with me, which will keep me from present want. You'll say I have made a miserable hand of it—so indeed I have—and, to look backwards, in a very little while too.

But what shall I do, if my father cannot be prevailed upon to recal his malediction? O my dear Mrs. Norton, what a weight must a father's curse have upon a heart so apprehensive as mine!—Did I think I should ever have a *father's curse* to deprecate? And yet, only that the temporary part of it is so terribly fulfilled, or I should be as earnest for its recal, for my *father's* sake, as for my own!

You must not be angry with me, that I wrote not to you before. You are very right and very kind, to say you are sure I love you. Indeed I do. And what a generosity [so like yourself!] is there in your praise, to attribute to me more than I merit, in order to raise an emulation in me to

deserve your praises!—You tell me what you expect from me in the calamities I am called upon to bear. May I behave answerably!

I *can* a little account to myself for my silence to you, my kind, my dear maternal friend! How equally sweetly and politely do you express yourself on this occasion! I was very desirous, for your sake, as well as for my own, that you should have it to say, that we did not correspond: had they thought we did, every word you could have dropt in my favour, would have been rejected; and my mother would have been forbid to see you, or to pay any regard to what you should say.

Then I had sometimes better and sometimes worse prospects before me. My worst would only have troubled you to know: my better made me frequently hope, that, by the next post, or the next, and so on for weeks, I should have the best news to impart to you, that *then* could happen: cold as the wretch had made my heart to *that best*.—For how could I think to write to you, with a confession, that I was not married, yet lived in the house (nor could I help it) with such a man?—Who likewise had given it out to several, that we were actually married, although with restrictions that depended on the reconciliation with my friends? and to disguise the truth, or be guilty of a falsehood either direct or equivocal, *that* was what you had never taught me.

But I might have written to you for advice, in my precarious situation, perhaps you will think. But, indeed, my dear Mrs. Norton, I was not lost for want of advice. And this will appear clear to you from what I have already hinted, were I to explain myself no further:—for what need had the cruel spoiler to have recourse to unprecedented arts—I will speak out plainer still, (but you must

not at present report it) to stupefying potions, and to the most brutal and outrageous force, had I been wanting in my duty?

A few words more upon this grievous subject—

When I reflect upon all that has happened to me, it is apparent, that this generally supposed *thoughtless* seducer has acted by me upon a regular and preconcerted plan of villany.

In order to set his vile plots in motion, nothing was wanting from the first, but to prevail upon me, either by force or fraud, to throw myself into his power: and when this was effected, nothing less than the intervention of the paternal authority (which I had not deserved to be exerted in my behalf) could have saved me from the effect of his deep machinations. Opposition from any other quarter would but too probably have precipitated his barbarous and ungrateful violence: and had *you yourself* been with me, I have reason *now* to think, that some how or other you would have suffered in endeavouring to save me: for never was there, as now I see, a plan of wickedness more steadily and uniformly pursued than *his* has been, against an unhappy creature who merited better of *him*: but the Almighty has thought fit, according to the general course of his providence, to make the fault bring on its own punishment: but surely not in consequence of my father's dreadful imprecation, 'that I might be punished *here*' [O my mamma Norton pray with me, if so, that *here* it stop!] 'by the very wretch in whom I had placed my wicked confidence!'

I am sorry for your sake to leave off so heavily. Yet the rest must be brief.

Let me desire you to be secret in what I have communicated to you: at least till you have my consent to divulge it.

God preserve to you your more faultless child!

I will hope for His mercy, although I should not obtain that of any earthly person.

And I repeat my prohibition:—you must not think of coming up to

Your ever dutiful,
CL. HARLOWE.

The obliging person, who left yours for me this day, promised to call to-morrow, to see if I should have any thing to return. I would not lose so good an opportunity.

LETTER XL.

MRS. NORTON TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Monday night, July 3.

O THE barbarous villany of this detestable man! And is there a man in the world, who could offer violence to so sweet a creature!

And are you sure you are now out of his reach?

You command me to keep secret the particulars of the vile treatment you have met with: or else, upon an unexpected visit, which Miss Harlowe favoured me with, soon after I had received your melancholy letter, I should have been tempted to own that I had heard from you, and to have communicated to her such parts of your two letters as would have demonstrated your penitence, and your earnestness to obtain the revocation of your father's malediction, as well as his protection from outrages that may still be offered to you. But then your sister would probably have expected a sight of your letters, and even to have been permitted to take them with her to the family.

Yet they *must* one day be acquainted with the sad story: and it is impossible but they must pity you, and forgive you when they know your early penitence, and your unprecedented sufferings; and that you have fallen by the brutal force of a barbarous ravisher, and not by the vile arts of a seducing lover.

The wicked man gives it out at Lord M.'s, as Miss Harlowe tells me, that he is actually married to you—yet she believes it not; nor had I the heart to let her know the truth.

She put it close to me, whether I had not corresponded with you from the time of your going away? I could safely tell her (as I did) that I had not: but I said, that I was well informed, that you took extremely to heart your father's imprecation; and that if she would excuse me, I would say, it would be a kind and sisterly part, if she would use her interest to get you discharged from it.

Among other severe things, she told me, that my partial fondness for you made me very little consider the honour of the rest of the family: but, if I had not heard this from you, she supposed I was set on by Miss Howe.

She expressed herself with a good deal of bitterness against that young lady; who, it seems, every where, and to every body, (for you must think, that your story is the subject of all conversations) rails against your family; treating them, as your sister says, with contempt, and even with ridicule.

I am sorry such angry freedoms are taken, for two reasons; first, because such liberties never do any good. I have heard you own, that Miss Howe has a satirical vein; but I should hope, that a young lady of her sense, and right cast of mind, must know that the end of satire is not to exas-

perate, but amend; and should never be *personal.* If it *be*, as my good father used to say, it may make an impartial person suspect, that the satirist has a natural spleen to gratify; which may be as great a fault in *him*, as any of those which he pretends to censure and expose in *others.*

Perhaps a hint of this from you will not be thrown away.

My second reason is, that these freedoms, from so warm a friend to you as Miss Howe is known to be, are most likely to be charged to your account.

My resentments are so strong against this vilest of men, that I dare not touch upon the shocking particulars which you mention of his baseness. What defence, indeed, could there be against so determined a wretch, after you was in his power? I will only repeat my earnest supplication to you, that, black as appearances are, you will not despair. Your calamities are exceeding great; but then you have talents proportioned to your trials. This every body allows.

Suppose the worst, and that your family will not be moved in your favour, your Cousin Morden will soon arrive, as Miss Harlowe told me. If he should even be got over to their side, he will, however, see justice done you; and then may you live an exemplary life, making hundreds happy, and teaching young ladies to shun the snares in which you have been so dreadfully entangled.

As to the man you have lost, is an union with such a perjured heart as his, with such an admirable one as yours, to be wished for? A base, *low-hearted* wretch, as you justly call him, with all his pride of ancestry; and more an enemy to himself with regard to his present and future happiness, than to you, in the barbarous and ungrateful wrongs he has done you: I need not, I am sure, exhort

you to despise such a man as this; since not being able to do so, would be a reflection upon a sex to which you have always been an honour.

Your moral character is yet untainted: the very nature of your sufferings, as you well observe, demonstrates *that*. Cheer up, therefore, your dear heart, and do not despair; for is it not God who governs the world, and permits some things, and directs others, as he pleases? And will he not reward *temporary sufferings*, innocently incurred, and piously supported, with *eternal felicity*?—And what, my dear, is this poor needle's point of NOW to a *boundless* eternity?

My heart, however, labours under a double affliction: for my poor boy is *very* bad—a violent fever—nor can it be brought to intermit—pray for *him*, my dearest miss—for his recovery, if God see fit—I hope God *will* see fit—if not, (how can I bear to suppose that!) pray for *me*, that he will give me that patience and resignation which I have been wishing to you. I am, my dearest young lady,

Your ever-affectionate,

JUDITH NORTON.

LETTER XLI.

MISS CL. HARLOWE TO MRS. JUDITH NORTON.

Thursday, July 6.

I ought not, especially at this time, to add to your afflictions—but yet I cannot help communicating to you (who are now my *only* soothing friend) a new trouble that has befallen me.

I had but one friend in the world, beside you; and she is utterly displeased with me *. It is

* See the next letter.

grievous, but for one moment, to lie under a beloved person's censure; and this through imputations that affect one's honour and prudence. There are points so delicate, you know, my dear Mrs. Norton, that it is a degree of dishonour to have a vindication of one's self from them appear to be *necessary*. In the present case, my misfortune is, that I know not how to account, but by guess, (so subtle have been the workings of the dark spirit I have been unhappily entangled by) for some of the facts that I am called upon to explain.

Miss Howe, in short, supposes she has found a flaw in my character. I have just now received her severe letter—but I shall answer it, perhaps, in better temper, if I first consider yours; for indeed my patience is almost at an end. And yet I ought to consider, *that faithful are the wounds of a friend.* But so *many* things at once!—O, my dear Mrs. Norton, how shall so young a scholar in the school of affliction be able to bear such heavy and such various evils?

But to leave this subject for a while, and turn to your letter.

I am very sorry Miss Howe is so lively in her resentments on my account. I have always blamed her very freely for her liberties of this sort with my friends. I once had a good deal of influence over her kind heart, and she made all I said a law to her. But people in calamity have little weight in any thing, or with any body. Prosperity and independence are charming things on this account, that they give force to the counsels of a friendly heart; while it is thought insolence in the miserable to advise, or so much as to remonstrate.

Yet is Miss Howe an invaluable person: and is it to be expected that she should preserve the same regard for my judgment that she had before

I forfeited all title to discretion? With what face can I take upon me to reproach a want of prudence in *her?* But if I can be so happy as to re-establish myself in her ever-valued opinion, I shall endeavour to enforce upon her your just observations on this head.

You need not, you say, exhort me to despise such a man as him, by whom I have suffered—indeed you need not: for I would choose the cruellest death rather than to be his. And yet, my dear Mrs. Norton, I will own to you, *that once I could have loved him.—Ungrateful man!—had he permitted me to love him, I* once *could have loved him.* Yet he never deserved my love. And was not this a fault?—But now if I can but keep out of his hands, and obtain a last forgiveness, and that as well for the sake of my dear friends' future reflections, as for my own present comfort, it is all that I wish for.

Reconciliation with my friends I do not expect; nor pardon from them; at least, till in extremity, and as a *viaticum.*

O my beloved Mrs. Norton, you cannot imagine what I have suffered!—But indeed my heart is broken!—I am sure I shall not live to take possession of that independence, which you think would enable me to atone in some measure for my past conduct.

While this is my opinion, you may believe I shall not be easy till I can obtain a last forgiveness.

I wish to be left to take my own course, in endeavouring to procure this grace. Yet know I not, at present, what that course shall be.

I will write. But to *whom* is my doubt. Calamity has not yet given me the assurance to address myself to my FATHER. My UNCLES (well as they

once loved me) are hard-hearted. They never had their masculine passions humanized by the tender name of FATHER. Of my BROTHER I have no hope. I have then but my MOTHER, and my SISTER, to whom I can apply.—'And may I not, my dearest mamma, be permitted to lift up my trembling eye to your all-cheering, and your once *more* than indulgent, your *fond* eye, in hopes of seasonable mercy to the poor sick heart that yet beats with life drawn from your own dearer heart?—Especially when pardon only, and not restoration, is implored?'

Yet were I able to engage my mother's pity, would it not be a means to make *her* still more unhappy, than I have already made her, by the opposition she would meet with, were she to try to give force to that pity?

To my SISTER then, I think, I will apply—yet how hard-hearted has my sister been!—But I will not ask for protection! and yet I am in hourly dread, that I shall want protection.—All I will ask for at present (preparative to the last forgiveness I will implore) shall be only to be freed from the heavy curse that seems to have operated as far as it *can* operate, as to *this* life—and surely, it was passion, and not intention, that carried it so very far as to the *other*!

But why do I thus add to your distresses—It is not, my dear Mrs. Norton, that I have so much feeling for my *own* calamity, that I have *none* for *yours*; since yours is indeed an addition to my own. But you have one consolation (a very great one) which I have not:—that *your* afflictions, whether respecting your *more* or your *less* deserving child, rise not from any fault of your own.

But what can I do for you more than pray?—

Assure yourself, that in every supplication I put up for myself, I will with equal fervour remember both you and your son. For I am, and ever will be,

Your truly sympathising and dutiful

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XLII.

MISS HOWE TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Superscribed for Mrs. Rachel Clark, &c.

MY DEAR CLARISSA, Wednesday, July 5.

I HAVE at last heard from you from a quarter I little expected.

From my mother.

She had for some time seen me uneasy and grieving; and justly supposed it was about you: and this morning dropt a hint which made me conjecture that she must have heard something of you more than I knew. And when she found that this added to my uneasiness, she owned she had a letter in her hands of yours, dated the 29th of June, directed for me.

You may guess, that this occasioned a little warmth that could not be wished for by either.

[It is surprising, my dear, *mighty* surprising! that knowing the prohibition I lay under of corresponding with you, you could send a letter for me to our own house: since it must be fifty to one that it would fall into my mother's hands, as you find it did.]

In short, *she* resented that I should disobey her: I was as much concerned that she should open and withhold from me *my* letters: and at last she was pleased to compromise the matter with me, by

giving up the letter, and permitting me to write to you *once* or *twice*; she to see the contents of what I wrote. For besides the value she has for you, she could not but have great curiosity to know the occasion of so sad a situation as your melancholy letter shows you to be in.

[But I shall get her to be satisfied with hearing me read what I write; putting in between hooks, thus [], what I intend not to read to her.]

Need I to remind you, Miss Clarissa Harlowe, of *three* letters I wrote to you, to none of which I had any answer; except to the *first*, and that a few lines only, promising a letter at large, though you were well enough the day after you received my *second*, to go joyfully back again with him to the vile house? But more of these by-and-by. I must hasten to take notice of your letter of Wednesday last week; which you could *contrive* should fall into my mother's hands.

Let me tell you, that that letter has almost broken my heart. Good God! what have you brought yourself to, Miss Clarissa Harlowe?—Could I have believed, that after you had escaped from the miscreant, (with such mighty pains and earnestness escaped) and after such an attempt as he had made, you would have been prevailed upon not only to forgive him, but (without being married too) to return with him to that horrid house!—A house I had given you such an account of!—Surprising!——What an intoxicating thing is *this love*!—I *always* feared that you, even you, were not proof against its *inconsistent* effects.

You your *best self* have not escaped!—Indeed I see not how you could expect to escape.

What a tale have you to unfold!—You need not unfold it, my dear, I would have engaged to prognosticate all that has happened, had you but told

me that you would once more have put yourself in his power, after you had taken such pains to get out of it.

Your peace is destroyed!—I wonder not at it: since now you must reproach yourself for a credulity so ill-placed.

Your intellect is touched!—I am sure my heart bleeds for you: but, excuse me, my dear, I doubt your intellect was touched before you left Hampstead: or you would never have let him find you out there; or, when he did, suffer him to prevail upon you to return to the horrid brothel.

I *tell you*, I sent you *three letters*: the *first* of which, dated the 7th and 8th of June *, (for it was written at twice) came safe to your hands, as you sent me word by a few lines dated the 9th: had it not, I should have doubted my own safety; since in it I gave you such an account of the abominable house, and threw such cautions in your way in relation to that Tomlinson, as the more surprised me that you could think of going back to it again, after you had escaped from it, and from Lovelace—O my dear—But nothing now will I ever wonder at!

The *second*, dated June 10 †, was given into your own hand at Hampstead, on Sunday the 11th, as you was lying upon a couch, in a strange way, according to my messenger's account of you, bloated, and flush coloured; I don't know how.

The *third* was dated the 20th of June ‡. Having not heard one word from you since the promising billet of the 9th, I own I did not spare you in it. I ventured it by the usual conveyance, by that Wilson's, having no other: so cannot be sure you received it. Indeed, I rather think you might not:

* See Vol. V. p. 30, & seq.
† Ibid. p. 259. & seq.
‡ See p. 29—31, of this Volume.

because in yours, which fell into my mother's hands, you make no mention of it: and if you had had it, I believe it would have touched you too much to have been passed by unnoticed.

You have heard that I have been ill, you say. I had a cold, indeed; but it was so slight a one, that it confined me not an hour. But I doubt not, that strange things you have *heard*, and *been told*, to induce you to take the step, you took. And till you did take that step, (the going back with this villain, I mean) I knew not a more pitiable case than yours: since every body must have excused you before, who knew how you were used at home, and was acquainted with your prudence and vigilance. But, alas! my dear, we see that the *wisest people* are not to be depended upon, when *love*, like an *ignis fatuus*, holds up its misleading lights before their eyes.

My mother tells me, she sent you an answer, desiring you not to write to me, because it would grieve me. To be sure I *am* grieved; *exceedingly* grieved; and *disappointed* too, you must permit me to say. For I had always thought that there never was such a woman, at your years, in the world.

But I remember once an argument you held, on occasion of a censure passed in company upon an excellent preacher, who was not a very excellent liver: *preaching* and *practising*, you said, required quite different talents *: which, when united in the same person, made a man a saint; as *wit* and *judgment* going together constituted a genius.

You made it out, I remember, very prettily: but you never made it out, excuse me, my dear, more convincingly, than by that part of your late conduct which I complain of.

My love for you, and my concern for your ho-

* See Vol. II. p. 10.

nour, may possibly have made me a little of the severest: if you think so, place it to its proper account; to *that* love, and to *that* concern: which will but do justice to

Your afflicted and faithful

A. H.

P. S. My mother would not be satisfied without reading my letter herself; and that before I had fixed all my proposed hooks. She knows, by this means, and has excused our former correspondence.

She indeed suspected it before: and so she very well might; knowing me, and knowing my love of you.

She has so much real concern for your misfortunes, that thinking it will be a consolation to *you*, and that it will oblige *me*, she consents that you shall write to me the *particulars at large of your sad story:* but it is on condition that I show her all that has passed between us, relating to yourself and the vilest of men. I have the more cheerfully complied, as the communication cannot be to your disadvantage.

You may therefore write freely, and direct to our own house.

My mother promises to show me the copy of her letter to you, and your reply to it; which latter she has but just told me of. She already apologizes for the severity of hers: and thinks the sight of your reply will affect me too much. But having her promise, I will not dispense with it.

I doubt hers is severe enough. So I fear you will think mine: but you have taught me never to spare the *fault* for the *friend's* sake; and that a great error ought rather to be more inexcusable

in the person we value, than in one we are indifferent to; because it is a reflection upon our choice of that person, and tends to a breach of the love of mind; and to expose us to the world for our partiality. To the *love of mind*, I repeat; 'since it is impossible but the errors of the dearest friend must weaken our inward opinion of that friend; and thereby lay a foundation for future distance, and perhaps disgust.

God grant, that you may be able to clear your conduct *after* you had escaped from Hampstead; as all *before* that time was noble, generous, and prudent: the man a devil and you a saint!—— Yet I hope you can; and therefore expect it from you.

I send by a particular hand. He will call for your answer at your own appointment.

I am afraid this horrid wretch will trace out by the Post Offices where you are, if not careful.

To have *money*, and *will*, and *head*, to be a villain, is too much for the rest of the world, when they meet in one man.

LETTER XLIII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Thursday, July 6.

Few young persons have been able to give more convincing proofs than myself, how little true happiness lies in the enjoyment of our own wishes.

To produce one instance only of the truth of this observation: what would I have given for weeks past for the favour of a letter from my dear Miss Howe, in whose friendship I placed all my remaining comfort! Little did I think, that the next let-

ter she would honour me with, should be in such a style, as should make me look more than once at the subscription, that I might be sure (the name not being written at length) that it was not signed by another A. H. For surely, thought I, this is my sister Arabella's style: surely Miss Howe (blame me as she pleases in other points) could never repeat so *sharply* upon her friend, words written in the bitterness of spirit, and in the disorder of head; nor remind her, with asperity, and with mingled strokes of wit, of an argument held in the gaiety of an heart elated with prosperous fortunes, (as mine then was) and very little apprehensive of the severe turn that argument would one day take against herself.

But what have *I*, sunk in my fortunes; my character forfeited; my honour lost [while *I* know it, I care not *who* knows it], destitute of friends, and even of hope: what have *I* to do to show a spirit of repining and expostulation to a dear friend, because she is not *more* kind than a sister.

* * *

You have till now, my dear, treated me with great indulgence, if it was with greater than I had *deserved*, I may be to blame to have built upon it, on the consciousness that I *deserve it* now *as much as ever*. But I find, by the rising bitterness which will mingle with the gall in my ink, that I am not yet subdued enough to my condition.—I lay down my pen for one moment.

* * *

Pardon me, my Miss Howe. I have recollected myself: and will endeavour to give a particular answer to your letter; although it will take me up too much time to think of sending it by your messenger to-morrow: he can put off his journey, he

says, till Saturday. I will endeavour to have the whole narrative ready for you by Saturday.

But how to defend myself in every thing that has happened, I cannot tell: since in some part of the time in which my conduct appears to have been censurable, I was not myself; and to this hour I know not all the methods taken to deceive and ruin me.

You tell me, that in your first letter you gave me such an account of the vile house I was in, and such cautions about that Tomlinson, as make you wonder how I could think of going back.

Alas, my dear! I was tricked, most vilely tricked back, as you shall hear in its place.

Without *knowing* the house was so very *vile* a house from your *intended* information, I disliked the people too much ever *voluntarily* to have returned to it. But had you really written such cautions about Tomlinson and the house, as you seem to have *purposed* to do, they must, had they come in time, have been of infinite service to me. But not one word of either, whatever was your *intention,* did you mention to me, in that *first* of the *three* letters, you so warmly TELL ME you *did* send me. *I will inclose it to convince you* *.

But your account of your messenger's delivering to me your second letter, and the description he gives of me, as *lying upon a couch, in a strange way, bloated and flush coloured; you don't know how,* absolutely puzzles and confounds me.

Lord have mercy upon the poor Clarissa Harlowe! What can this mean!—*Who* was the messenger you sent? Was *he* one of Lovelace's creatures too?—Could nobody come near me but that

* The Letter she incloses was Mr. Lovelace's forged one. See Vol. V. p. 166, & seq.

man's confederates, either *setting out so*, or *made so?* I know not what to make of any one syllable of this! indeed I don't.

Let me see. You say, this was *before* I went from Hampstead! My intellects had not then been touched!—Nor had I ever been surprised by wine [strange if I had!] How then could I be found in such a *strange way, bloated and flush-coloured; you don't know how!*—Yet what a vile, what a hateful figure has your messenger represented me to have made.

But indeed I know nothing of any messenger from you.

Believing myself secure at Hampstead, I staid longer there than I would have done, in hopes of the letter promised me in your short one of the 9th, brought me by my own messenger, in which you undertake to send for and engage Mrs. Townsend in my favour *.

I wondered I heard not from you: and was told you were sick; and at another time, that your mother and you had had words on my account, and that you had refused to admit Mr. Hickman's visits upon it: so that I supposed at one time, that you were not able to write, at another, that your mother's prohibition had its *due* force with you. But now I have no doubt, that the wicked man must have intercepted your letter; and I wish he found not means to *corrupt your messenger* to tell you so strange a story.

It was on Sunday June 11, you say, that the man gave it me. I was at church twice that day, with Mrs. Moore. Mr. Lovelace was at her house the while, where he boarded, and wanted to have lodged; but I would not permit that, though I could not help the other. In one of these spaces

† See Vol. V. p. 160.

it must be that he had time to work upon the man. You'll easily, my dear, find that out, by inquiring the time of his arrival at Mrs. Moore's, and other circumstances of the *strange way* he pretended to see me in, *on a couch,* and the rest.

Had any body seen me afterwards, when I was betrayed back to the vile house, struggling under the operation of wicked potions, and robbed *indeed* of my intellects, (for this, as you shall hear, was my dreadful case) I might then, perhaps, have appeared *bloated,* and *flush-coloured,* and *I know not how myself.* But were you to see your poor Clarissa *now,* (or even to have seen her at Hampstead *before* she suffered the vilest of all outrages) you would not think her *bloated* or *flush-coloured:* indeed you would not.

In a word, it could not be *me* your messenger saw; nor (if any body) who it was can I divine.

I will now as *briefly* as the subject will permit, enter into the darker part of my sad story: and yet I must be something circumstantial, that you may not think me capable of *reserve* or *palliation.* The *latter* I am not conscious that I need. I should be utterly inexcusable, were I guilty of the *former* to you. And yet, if you knew how my heart sinks under the thoughts of a recollection so painful, you would pity me.

As I shall not be able, perhaps, to conclude what I have to write in even two or three letters, I will begin a new one with my story: and send the whole of it together, although written at different periods, as I am able.

Allow me a little pause, my dear, at this place; and to subscribe myself

Your ever affectionate and obliged,

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XLIV.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

[*Referred to in Vol. V. p.* 315.]

Thursday night.

He had found me out at Hampstead: strangely found me out; for I am still at a loss to know by what means.

I was loth, in my billet of the 9th *, to tell you so, for fear of giving you apprehensions for me; and besides, I hoped then to have a shorter and happier issue to account to you for, through your assistance, than I met with.

She then gives a narrative of all that passed at Hampstead between herself, Mr. Lovelace, Capt. Tomlinson, and the women there, to the same effect with that so amply given by Mr. Lovelace.

Mr. Lovelace finding all that he could say, and all Capt. Tomlinson could urge, ineffectual, to prevail upon me to forgive an outrage so flagrantly premeditated; rested all his hopes on a visit which was to be paid me by Lady Betty Lawrance and Miss Montague.

In my uncertain situation, my prospects all so dark, I knew not to whom I might be obliged to have recourse in the last resort: and as those ladies had the best of characters, insomuch that I had reason to regret that I had not from the first thrown myself upon their protection, (when I had forfeited *that* of my own friends) I thought I would not *shun* an interview with them, though I was too

* See Vol. V. p. 175.

indifferent to their kinsman to *seek* it, as I doubted not, that one end of their visit would be to reconcile me to him.

On Monday the 12th of June, these pretended ladies came to Hampstead; and I was presented to them, and they to me by their kinsman.

They were richly dressed, and stuck out with jewels; the pretended Lady Betty's were particularly very fine.

They came in a coach and four, hired, as was confessed, while their own was repairing in town: a pretence made, I now perceive, that I should not guess at the imposture by the want of the real lady's arms upon it.

I had heard, that Lady Betty was a fine woman, and that Miss Montague was a beautiful young lady, genteel, and graceful, and full of vivacity—such were these impostors; and having never seen either of them, I had not the least suspicion, that they were not the ladies they personated; and being put a little out of countenance by the richness of their dresses, I could not help (fool that I was) apologizing for my own.

The pretended Lady Betty then told me, that her nephew had acquainted them with the situation of affairs between us. And although she could not but say, that she was very glad that he had not put such a slight upon his lordship and them, as report had given them cause to apprehend (the reasons for which report, however, she much approved of); yet it had been a matter of great concern to her, and to her niece Montague, and would to the whole family, to find so great a misunderstanding subsisting between us, as, if not made up, might distance all their hopes.

She could easily tell who was in fault, she said, and gave him a look both of anger and disdain;

asking him, how it was possible for him to give an offence of *such* a nature to so charming a lady [so she called me] as should occasion a resentment so strong?

He pretended to be awed into shame and silence.

My dearest niece, said she, and took my hand, (I *must* call you niece, as well from love, as to humour your uncle's laudable expedient) permit me to be, not an advocate, but a mediatrix for him; and not for his sake so much as for my own, my Charlotte's, and all our family's. The indignity he has offered to you, may be of too tender a nature to be inquired into. But as he declares, that it was not a premeditated offence; whether, my dear, [for I was going to rise upon it in my temper] it were or not; as he declares his sorrow for it, (and never did creature express a deeper sorrow for any offence than he) and as it is a reparable one; let *us*, for this one time, forgive him; and thereby lay an obligation upon this man of errors—let US, I say, my dear, for, sir, [turning to him] an offence against such a peerless lady as this, must be an offence against *me*, against your *cousin* here, and against *all the virtuous* of our sex.

See, my dear, what a creature he had picked out! Could you have thought there was a woman in the world who could thus express herself, and yet be vile? But she had her principal instructions from him, and those written down too, as I have reason to think: for I have recollected since, that I once saw this Lady Betty, (who often rose from her seat, and took a turn to the other end of the room with such emotion, as if the joy of her heart would not let her sit still) take out a paper from her stays, and look into it, and put it there again. She might

oftener, and I not observe it: for I little thought there could be such impostors in the world.

I could not forbear paying great attention to what she said. I found my tears ready to start: I drew out my handkerchief, and was silent. I had not been so indulgently treated a great while by a person of character and distinction [such I thought her]; and durst not trust to the accent of my voice.

The pretended Miss Montague joined in on this occasion; and drawing her chair close to me, took my other hand, and besought me to forgive her cousin: and consent to rank myself as one of the principals of a family, that had long, very long coveted the honour of my alliance.

I am ashamed to repeat to you, my dear, now I know what wretches they are, the tender, the obliging, and the respectful things I said to them.

The wretch himself then came forward. He threw himself at my feet. How was I beset!—The women, grasping, one my right hand, the other my left: the pretended Miss Montague pressing to her lips more than once the hand she held: the wicked man on his kness, imploring my forgiveness! and setting before me my happy and my unhappy prospects, as I should forgive or not forgive him. All that he thought would affect me in his former pleas, and those of Capt. Tomlinson, he repeated. He vowed, he promised, he bespoke the pretended ladies to answer for him; and they engaged their honours in his behalf.

Indeed, my dear, I was distressed, perfectly distressed. I was sorry that I had given way to this visit. For I knew not how, in tenderness to relations (as I thought them) so worthy, to treat so freely as he deserved, a man nearly allied to them: so that my arguments, and my resolutions, were deprived of their greatest force.

I pleaded, however, my application to you. I expected every hour, I told them, an answer from you to a letter I had written, which would decide my future destiny.

They offered to apply to you themselves in person, in *their own behalf,* as they politely termed it. They besought me to write to you to hasten your answer.

I said, I was sure that you would write the moment that the event of an application to be made to a third person enabled you to write. But as to the success of their requests in behalf of their kinsman, that depended not upon the expected answer; for *that,* I begged their pardon, was out of the question. I wished him well. I wished him happy. But I was convinced, that I neither could make *him* so, nor he *me.*

Then! how the wretch promised!—How he vowed!—How he entreated!—And how the women pleaded!—And they engaged themselves, and the honour of their whole family, for his just, his kind, his tender behaviour to me.

In short, my dear, I was so hard set, that I was obliged to come to a more favourable compromise with them than I had intended. I would wait for your answer to my letter, I said: and if that made doubtful or difficult the change of measures I had resolved upon, and the scheme of life I had formed, I would then consider of the matter; and, if they would permit me, lay all before them, and take their advice upon it, in conjunction with yours, as if the one were my own aunt, and the other were my own cousin.

They shed tears upon this—of joy they called them:—but since, I believe, to their credit, bad as they are, that they were tears of temporary re-

morse; for the pretended Miss Montague turned about, and, as I remember, said, there was no standing it.

But Mr. Lovelace was not so easily satisfied. He was fixed upon his villanous measures perhaps; and so might not be sorry to have a pretence against me. He bit his lip—he had been but too much used, he said, to such indifference, such coldness, in the very midst of his happiest prospects. I had on twenty occasions shown him to his infinite regret, that any favour I was to confer upon him was to be the result of—there he stopt—and not of my choice.

This had like to have set all back again. I was exceedingly offended. But the pretended ladies interposed. The elder severely took him to task. He ought, she told him, to be satisfied with what I had said. She *desired* no other condition. And what, sir, said she, with an air of authority, would you commit errors, and expect to be rewarded for them?

They then engaged me in a more agreeable conversation—the pretended lady declared, that she, Lord M. and Lady Sarah, would directly and personally interest themselves to bring about a general reconciliation between the two families, and this either in open or private concert with my uncle Harlowe, as should be thought fit. Animosities on one side had been carried a great way, she said; and too little care had been shown on the other, to mollify or heal. My father should see that they could treat him as a brother and a friend; and my brother and sister should be convinced, that there was no room either for the jealousy or envy they had conceived from motives too unworthy to be avowed.

Could I help, my dear, being pleased with them?—

Permit me here to break off. The task grows too heavy, at present, for the heart of

Your

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XLV.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE. IN CONTINUATION.

I WAS very ill, and obliged to lay down my pen. I thought I should have fainted. But am better now—so will proceed.

The pretended ladies, the more we talked, the fonder they seemed to be of me. And *the* Lady Betty had Mrs. Moore called up; and asked her, if she had accommodations for her niece and self, her woman, and two men servants for three or four days?

Mr. Lovelace answered for her that she had.

She would not ask her dear niece Lovelace [*Permit me, my dear,* whispered she, *this charming style before strangers! I will keep your uncle's secret*] whether she should be welcome or not to be so near her. But for the time she should stay in these parts, she would come up every night—What say *you*, niece Charlotte?

The pretended Charlotte answered, she should like to do so, of all things.

The Lady Betty called her an obliging girl. She liked the place, she said. Her cousin Leeson would excuse her. The air, and my company, would do her good. She never chose to lie in the smoky town, if she could help it. In short, my dear, said she to me, I will stay till you hear from Miss Howe,

and till I have your consent to go with me to Glenham Hall. Not one moment will I be out of your company, when I can have it. Stedman, my solicitor, as the distance from town is so small, may attend me here for instructions. Niece Charlotte, one word with you, child.

They retired to the further end of the room, and talked about their night-dresses.

The Miss Charlotte said, Morrison might be ordered to bring them.

True, said the other—but I have some letters in my private box, which I must have up. And you know, Charlotte, that I trust nobody with the keys of that.

Could not Morrison bring up that box?

No. She thought it safest where it was. She had heard of a robbery committed but two days ago, at the foot of Hampstead Hill; and she should be ruined if she lost her box.

Well then, it was but going to town to undress, and she would leave her jewels behind her, and return; and should be easier a great deal on all accounts.

For my part, I wondered they came up with them. But that was to be taken as a respect paid to me. And then they hinted at another visit of ceremony which they had thought to make, had they not found me so inexpressibly engaging.

They talked loud enough for me to hear them; on purpose, no doubt, though in affected whispers; and concluded with high praises of me.

I was not fool enough to believe, or to be puffed up with their encomiums; yet not suspecting them, I was not displeased at so favourable a beginning of acquaintance with ladies (whether I was to be related to them or not) of whom I had always heard honourable mention. And yet at the time I thought,

highly as they exalted *me*, that in some respects (though I hardly knew in what) they fell short of what I expected *them* to be.

The grand deluder was at the further end of the room, another way; probably to give me an opportunity to hear the preconcerted praises—looking into a book, which, had there not been a preconcert, would not have taken his attention for one moment. It was *Taylor's Holy Living and Dying*.

When the pretended ladies joined me, he approached me with it in his hand—A smart book, this, my dear!—This old divine affects, I see, a mighty flowery style upon a very solemn subject. But it puts me in mind of an ordinary country funeral, where the young women, in honour of a defunct companion, especially if she were a virgin, or *passed for such*, make a flower-bed of her coffin.

And then, laying down the book, turning upon his heel, with one of his usual airs of gaiety, And are you determined, ladies, to take up your lodgings with my charming creature?

Indeed they were.

Never were there more cunning, more artful impostors, than these women. Practised creatures, to be sure: yet genteel; and they must have been well educated—once, perhaps, as much the delight of their parents as I was of mine: and who knows by what arts ruined, body and mind!—O my dear! how pregnant is this reflection!

But the *man*!—Never was there a man so deep.—Never so consummate a deceiver; except that detested Tomlinson; whose years and seriousness joined with a solidity of sense and judgment that seemed uncommon, gave him, one would have thought, advantages in villany, the other had not time for. Hard, very hard, that I should fall into the

knowledge of two such wretches; when two more such, I hope, are not to be met with in the world! Both so determined to carry on the most barbarous and perfidious projects against a poor young creature, who never did or wished harm to either.

Take the following slight account of these women's and of this man's behaviour to each other before me.

Mr. Lovelace carried himself to his pretended aunt with high respect, and paid a great deference to all she said. He permitted her to have all the advantage over him in the repartees and retorts that passed between them. I could, indeed, easily see, that it *was* permitted; and that he forbore that acumen, that quickness, which he never spared showing to the pretended Miss Montague: and which a man of wit seldom knows how to spare showing, when an opportunity offers to display his wit.

The pretended Miss Montague was still more respectful in her behaviour to her pretended aunt. While the aunt kept up the dignity of the character she had assumed, raillying both of them with the air of a person who depends upon the superiority which years and fortune give over younger persons, who might have a view to be obliged to her, either in her life, or at her death.

The severity of her raillery, however, was turned upon Mr. Lovelace, on occasion of the character of the people who kept the lodgings, which, she said, I had thought myself so well warranted to leave privately.

This startled me. For having then no suspicion of the vile Tomlinson, I concluded (and your letter of the 7th * favoured my conclusion) that if the house were notorious, either he, or Mr. Mennell,

* His forged Letter. See Vol. V. p. 166, & seq.

would have given me or him some hints of it.—Nor, although I liked not the people, did I observe any thing in them very culpable, till the Wednesday night before, that they offered not to come to my assistance, although within hearing of my distress, (as I am sure they were) and having as much reason to be frighted at the fire, had it been real.

I looked with indignation upon Mr. Lovelace, at this hint.

He seemed abashed. I have not patience, but to recollect the specious looks of this vile deceiver. But how was it possible, that even that florid countenance of his should enable him to command a blush at his pleasure? For blush he did, more than once: and the blush, on this occasion, was a deep dyed crimson, unstrained for, and natural, as I thought—but he is so much of the actor, that he seems able to enter into any character; and his muscles and features appear entirely under the obedience of his wicked will *.

The pretended lady went on, saying, she had taken upon herself to inquire after the people, on hearing that I had left the house in disgust; and though she heard not any thing *much* amiss, yet she heard enough to make her wonder that he could carry his lady, a person of so much delicacy, to a house, that if it had not a *bad* fame, had not a *good* one.

* It is proper to observe, that there was a more natural reason than this that the lady gives for Mr. Lovelace's blushing. It was a blush of indignation, as he owned afterwards to his friend Belford, in conversation; for the pretended Lady Betty had mistaken her cue, in condemning the house; and he had much ado to recover the blunder; being obliged to follow her lead, and vary from his first design; which was to have the people of the house spoken well of, in order to induce her to return to it, were it but on pretence to direct her clothes to be carried to Hampstead.

You must think, my dear, that I liked the pretended Lady Betty the better for this. I suppose it was designed I should.

He was surprised, he said, that her ladyship should hear a bad character of the people. It was what he had never before heard that they deserved. It was easy, indeed, to see, that they had not very great delicacy, though they were not indelicate. The nature of their livelihood, letting lodgings, and taking people to board, (and yet he had understood that they were nice in these particulars) led them to aim at being free and obliging: and it was difficult, he said, for persons of cheerful dispositions, so to behave, as to avoid censure: openness of heart and countenance in the sex (more was the pity) too often subjected good people, whose fortunes did not set them above the world, to uncharitable censure.

He wished, however, that her ladyship would tell *what* she had heard: although now it signified but little, because he never would ask me to set foot within their doors again: and he begged she would not mince the matter.

Nay, no great matter, she said. But she had been informed, that there were more women-lodgers in the house than men: yet that their visitors were more men than women. And this had been hinted to her (perhaps by ill-willers, she could not answer for that) in such a way, as if something further were meant by it than was spoken.

This, he said, was the true inuendo way of characterizing, used by detractors. Every body and every thing had a black and a white side, of which well-wishers and ill-wishers may make their advantage. He had observed that the front house was well let, and he believed, more to the one sex

than to the other; for he had seen, occasionally passing to and fro, several genteel modest looking women; and who, it was very probable, were not so ill-beloved, but they might have visitors and relations of both sexes: but they were none of them any thing to us, or we to them: we were not once in any of their companies: but in the genteelest and most retired house of the two, which we had in a manner to ourselves, with the use of a parlour to the street, to serve us for a servant's hall, or to receive common visitors, or our traders only, whom we admitted not up stairs.

He always loved to speak as he found. No man in the world had suffered more from calumny than he himself had done.

Women, he owned, ought to be more scrupulous than men needed to be where they lodged. Nevertheless, he wished, that fact, rather than surmise, were to be the foundation of their judgments, especially when they spoke of one another.

He meant no reflection upon her ladyship's informants, or rather *surmisants*, (as he might call them) be they who they would: nor did he think himself, obliged to defend characters impeached, or not thought well of, by women of virtue and honour. Neither were these people of importance enough to have so much said about them.

The pretended Lady Betty said, all who knew her would clear her of censoriousness: that it gave her some opinion, she must needs say, of the people, that he continued there so long with me: that I had rather *negative* than *positive* reasons of dislike to them; and that so shrewd a man as she heard Capt. Tomlinson was, had not objected to them.

I think, niece Charlotte, proceeded she, as my nephew has not parted with these lodgings, you and I (for as my dear Miss Harlowe dislikes the

people, I would not ask *her* for her company) will take a dish of tea with my nephew there, before we go out of town; and then we shall see what sort of people they are. I have heard that Mrs. Sinclair is a mighty forbidding creature.

'With all my heart, madam, in *your ladyship's* company, I shall make no scruple of going any whither.

It was *ladyship* at every word; and as she seemed proud of her title, and of her dress too, I might have guessed she was not used to *either*.

What say *you*, cousin Lovelace? Lady Sarah, though a melancholy woman, is very inquisitive about all your affairs. I must acquaint her with every particular circumstance when I go down.

With all his heart. He would attend her whenever she pleased. She would see very handsome apartments, and very civil people.

The deuce is in them, said *the* Miss Montague, if they appear otherwise to us.

She then fell into family talk; family happiness on my hoped-for accession into it. They mentioned Lord M.'s and Lady Sarah's great desire to see me: how many friends and admirers, with uplift hands, I should have [*O my dear, what a triumph must these creatures, and he, have over the poor devoted all the time!*]—What a happy man he would be!—They would not, *the* Lady Betty said, give themselves the mortification but to suppose, that I should not be one of them.

Presents were hinted at. She resolved I should go with her to Glenham Hall. She would not be refused, although she were to stay a week beyond her time for me.

She longed for the expected letter from you. I must write to hasten it, and to let Miss Howe know how every thing stood since I wrote last.

That might dispose me absolutely in their favour and in her nephew's; and then she hoped there would be no occasion for me to think of entering upon any new measures.

Indeed, my dear, I did at the time intend, if I heard not from you by morning, to dispatch a man and horse to you, with the particulars of *all*, that you might (if you thought proper) at least, put off Mrs. Townsend's coming up to another day. But I was miserably prevented.

She made me promise that I would write to you upon this subject, whether I heard from you or not. One of her servants should ride post with my letter, and wait for Miss Howe's answer.

She then launched out in deserved praises of you, my dear. How fond should she be of the honour of your acquaintance.

The pretended Miss Montague joined in with her, as well for herself as for her sister.

Abominably well instructed were they both.

O my dear! what risks may poor giddy girls run, when they throw themselves out of the protection of their natural friends, and into the wide world?

They then talked again of reconciliation and intimacy with every one of my friends: with my mother particularly; and gave the dear good lady the praises that every one gives her, who has the happiness to know her.

Ah, my dear Miss Howe! I had almost forgot my resentment against the pretended nephew!—So many agreeable things said, made me think, that, if you should advise it, and if I could bring my mind to forgive the wretch for an outrage so *premeditatedly* vile, and could forbear despising him for that and his other ungrateful and wicked ways, I might not be unhappy in an alliance with such a

family. Yet, thought I at the time, with what intermixtures does every thing come to me, that has the appearance of good!——However, as my lucid hopes made me see fewer faults in the behaviour of these pretended ladies, than recollection and abhorrence have helped me since to see, I began to reproach myself, that I had not at first thrown myself into their protection.

But amidst all these delightful prospects, I must not, said *the* Lady Betty, forget that I am to go to town.

She then ordered her coach to the door—We will all go to town together, said she, and return together. And it will be a little airing for you, my dear, and a good opportunity for Mr. Lovelace to order what you want of your apparel to be sent from your former lodgings to Mrs. Leeson's; and we can bring it up with us from thence.

I had no intention to comply. But as I did not imagine she would insist upon my going to town with them, I made no answer to that part of her speech.

I must here lay down my tired pen!

Recollection! heart-affecting recollection! how it pains me!

LETTER XLVI.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

In the midst of these agreeablenesses, the coach came to the door. The pretended Lady Betty besought me to give them my company to their cousin Leeson's. I desired to be excused: yet suspected nothing. She would not be denied. How happy would a visit so condescending make h

cousin Leeson!—Her cousin Leeson was not unworthy of my acquaintance! And would take it for the greatest favour in the world.

I objected my dress. But the objection was not admitted. She bespoke a supper of Mrs. Moore to be ready at nine.

Mr. Lovelace, vile hypocrite, and wicked deceiver! seeing, as he said, my dislike to go, desired her ladyship not to insist upon it.

Fondness of my company was pleaded. She begged me to oblige her: made a motion to help me to my fan herself; and, in short, was so very urgent, that my feet complied against my speech, and my mind: and being in a manner led to the coach by her, and made to step in first, she followed me: and her pretended niece and the wretch followed her! and away it drove.

Nothing but the height of affectionate complaisance passed all the way: over and over, what a joy would this unexpected visit give her cousin Leeson! What a pleasure must it be to such a mind as mine, to be able to give so much joy to every body I came near!

The cruel, the savage seducer (as I have since recollected) was in rapture all the way; but yet such a sort of rapture, as he took visible pains to check.

Hateful villain! How I abhor him!—What mischief must then be in his plotting heart!—What a devoted victim must I then be in all their eyes!

Though not pleased, I was nevertheless just then thoughtless of danger; they endeavouring thus to lift me up above all apprehensions of that, and above myself too.

But think, my dear, what a dreadful turn all had upon me, when, through several streets and ways I knew nothing of, the coach slackening its pace,

came within sight of the dreadful house of the dreadfullest woman in the world; as she proved to me.

Lord be good unto me! cried the poor fool, looking out of the coach—Mr. Lovelace!—Madam!—turning to the pretended Lady Betty!—Madam! turning to the niece, my hands and eyes lifted up—Lord be good unto me!

What! What! What! my dear!

He pulled the string—what need to have come this way? said he—but since we are, I will but ask a question—my dearest life, *why* this apprehension?

The coachman stopped: *his* servant, who, with one of hers was behind, alighted—Ask, said he, if I have any letters? Who knows, my dearest creature, turning to me, but we may already have one from the captain? We will not go out of the coach!—Fear nothing—why so apprehensive?—Oh! these fine spirits!—cried the execrable insulter.

Dreadfully did my heart then misgive me: I was ready to faint. Why this terror, my life? You shall not stir out of the coach—but one question, now the fellow has drove us this way.

Your lady will faint, cried the execrable Lady Betty, turning to him—my dearest niece! (niece I will call you, taking my hand) we must alight, if you are so ill.—Let us alight—only for a glass of water and hartshorn—indeed we must alight.

No, no, no—I am well—quite well—won't the man drive on!—I am well—quite well—indeed I am.—*Man,* drive on, putting my head out of the coach—*Man,* drive on!—though my voice was too low to be heard.

The coach stopt at the door. How I trembled!

Dorcas came to the door, on its stopping.

My dearest creature, said the vile man, gasping, as it were for breath, you shall *not* alight—any letters for me, Dorcas?

There are two, sir. And here is a gentleman, Mr. Belton, sir, waits for your honour; and has done so above an hour.

I'll just speak to him. Open the door—you shan't step out, my dear—a letter perhaps from the captain already!—You shan't step out, my dear.

I sighed, as if my heart would burst.

But we *must* step out, nephew: your lady will faint. Maid, a glass of hartshorn and water!—My dear, you *must* step out—you will faint, child—we must cut your laces.—[*I believe my complexion* was all manner of colours by turns]—indeed, you must step out, my dear.

He knew, he said, I should be well, the moment the coach drove from the door. I should *not* alight, by his soul, I should not.

Lord, lord, nephew, lord, lord, cousin, both women in a breath, what ado you make about nothing! You *persuade* your lady to be afraid of alighting.—See you not, that she is just fainting?

Indeed, madam, said the vile seducer, my dearest love must not be moved in this point against her will. I beg it may not be insisted upon.

Fiddle-faddle, foolish man—what a pother is here! I guess how it is: you are ashamed to let us see what sort of people you carried your lady among—but do you go out, and speak to your friend, and take your letters.

He stept out; but shut the coach door after him, to oblige me.

The coach may go on, madam, said I.

The coach *shall* go on, my dear life, said he—but he gave not, nor intended to give, orders that it should.

Let the coach go on! said I.—Mr. Lovelace may come after us.

Indeed, my dear, you are ill!—Indeed you must alight—alight but for one quarter of an hour.—Alight but to give orders yourself about your things. Whom can you be afraid of in my company, and my niece's? These people must have behaved shockingly to you! Please the Lord, I'll inquire into it!—I'll see what sort of people they are!

Immediately came the old creature to the door. A thousand pardons, dear madam, stepping to the coach-side, if we have any way offended you—be pleased, ladies, [to the other two] to alight.

Well, my dear, whispered *the* Lady Betty, I now find that an hideous description of a person we never saw, is an advantage to them. I thought the woman was a monster—but, really, she seems tolerable.

I was afraid I should have fallen into fits: but still refused to go out—Man!—Man!—Man!—cried I, gaspingly, my head out of the coach and in, by turns, half a dozen times running, drive on!—Let us go!

My heart misgave me beyond the power of my own accounting for it; for still I did not suspect these women. But the antipathy I had taken to the vile house, and to find myself so near it, when I expected no such matter, with the sight of the old creature, all together made me behave like a distracted person.

The hartshorn and water was brought. The pretended Lady Betty made me drink it. Heaven knows if there were any thing else in it!

Besides, said she, whisperingly, I must see what sort of creatures the *nieces* are. Want of delicacy cannot be hid from me. You could not surely,

my dear, have this aversion to re-enter a house, for a few minutes, in our company, in which you lodged and boarded several weeks, unless these women could be so presumptuously vile, as my nephew ought not to know.

Out stept the pretended lady; the servant, at her command, having opened the door.

Dearest madam, said the other to me, let me follow you, [for I was next the door.] Fear nothing; I will not stir from your presence.

Come, my dear, said the pretended lady: give me your hand; holding out hers. Oblige me this once.

I will bless your footsteps, said the old creature, if once more you honour my house with your presence.

A crowd by this time was gathered about us; but I was too much affected to mind that.

Again the pretended Miss Montague urged me; standing up as ready to go out if I would give her room. Lord, my dear, said she, who can bear this crowd?—What will people think?

The pretended lady again pressed me, with both her hands held out—Only, my dear, to give orders about your things.

And thus pressed, and gazed at, (for then I looked about me) the women so richly dressed, people whispering; in an evil moment, out stepped I, trembling, forced to lean with both my hands (frighted too much for ceremony) on the pretended Lady Betty's arm—O that I had dropped down dead upon the guilty threshold!

We shall stay but a few minutes, my dear!—but a few minutes! said the same specious jilt—out of breath with her joy, as I have since thought, that they had thus triumphed over the unhappy victim!

Come, Mrs. Sinclair, I think your name is, show us the way—following her, and leading me, I am very thirsty. You have frighted me, my dear, with your strange fears. I must have tea made, if it can be done in a moment. We have further to go, Mrs. Sinclair, and must return to Hampstead this night.

It shall be ready in a moment, cried the wretch. We have water boiling.

Hasten, then—come, my dear, to me, as she led me through the passage to the fatal inner house—lean upon me—how you tremble!—how you falter in your steps!—Dearest niece Lovelace, [the old wretch being in hearing] why these hurries upon your spirits?—We'll be gone in a minute.

And thus she led the poor sacrifice into the old wretch's too well known parlour.

Never was any body so gentle, so meek, so low-voiced as the odious woman! drawling out in a puling accent, all the obliging things she could say: awed, I then thought, by the conscious dignity of a woman of quality; glittering with jewels.

The called-for tea was ready presently.

There was no Mr. Belton, I believe: for the wretch went not to any body, unless it were while we were parleying in the coach. No such person, however, appeared at the tea-table.

I was made to drink two dishes, with milk, complaisantly urged by the pretended ladies helping me each to one. I was stupid to their hands; and when I took the tea, almost choaked with vapours; and could hardly swallow.

I thought, *transiently* thought, that the tea, the last dish particularly, had an odd taste. They, on my palating it, observed that the milk was *London milk*: far short in goodness of what they were accustomed to from their own dairies.

I have no doubt that my two dishes, and perhaps my hartshorn, were prepared for me: in which case it was more proper for their purpose, that *they* should help me, than that I should help *myself*. Ill before, I found myself still more and more disordered in my head: a heavy torpid pain increasing fast upon me. But I imputed it to my terror.

Nevertheless, at the pretended ladies' motion, I went up stairs, attended by Dorcas: who affected to weep for joy, that she once more saw my *blessed* face; that was the vile creature's word, and immediately I set about taking out some of my clothes, ordering what should be put up, and what sent after me.

While I was thus employed, up came the pretended Lady Betty, in a hurrying way——My dear, you won't be long before you are ready. My nephew is very busy in writing answers to his letters: so I'll just whip away and change my dress, and call upon you in an instant.

O madam!—I *am* ready! I am *now* ready!—You must not leave me here. And down I sunk, affrighted, into a chair.

This instant, this instant I will return—before you can be ready—before you can have packed up your things—we would not be late—the robbers we have heard of may be out—don't let us be late.

And away she hurried before I could say another word. Her pretended niece went with her, without taking notice to me of her going.

I had no suspicion yet, that these women were not indeed the ladies they personated; and I blamed myself for my weak fears.—It cannot *be*, thought I, that *such* ladies will abet treachery against a poor creature they are so fond of. They must undoubtedly *be* the persons they *appear* to be

—what folly to doubt it! The air, the dress, the dignity of women of quality. How unworthy of them, and of my charity, concluded I, is this ungenerous shadow of suspicion!

So recovering my stupified spirits, as well as they could be recovered, (for I was heavier and heavier: and wondered to Dorcas, what ailed me: rubbing my eyes and taking some of her snuff, pinch after pinch, to very little purpose) I pursued my employment: but when that was over, all packed up that I designed to be packed up; and I had nothing to do but to *think*; and found them tarry so long; I thought I should have gone distracted. I shut myself into the chamber that had been mine; I kneeled, I prayed; yet knew not what I prayed for: then ran out again: it was almost dark night, I said; where, where was Mr. Lovelace?

He came to me, taking no notice at first of my consternation and wildness [what they had given me made me incoherent and wild]: All goes well, said he, my dear!—A line from Capt. Tomlinson!

All indeed did go well for the villanous project of the most cruel and most villanous of men!

I *demanded* his aunt!—I *demanded* his cousin!—The evening, I said, was closing!—My head was very, *very* bad, I remember, I said—and it grew worse and worse—

Terror, however, as yet kept up my spirits; and I insisted upon his going himself to hasten them.

He called his servant. He raved at the *sex* for *their* delay: 'twas well that business of consequence seldom depended upon such parading, unpunctual triflers!

His servant came.

He ordered him to fly to his cousin Leeson's, and to let Lady Betty and his cousin know how uneasy we both were at their delay: adding of his own

accord, Desire them, if they don't come instantly, to send their coach, and we will go without them. Tell them I wonder they'll serve me so!

I thought this was considerately and fairly put. But now, indifferent as my head was, I had a little time to consider the man and his behaviour. He terrified me with his looks, and with his violent emotions, as he gazed upon me. Evident *joy-suppressed* emotions, as I have since recollected. His sentences short, and pronounced as if his breath were touched. Never saw I his abominable eyes look, as then they looked—triumph in them!—Fierce and wild; and more disagreeable than the women's at the vile house appeared to me when I first saw them: and at times, such a leering, mischief-boding cast!—I would have given the world to have been an hundred miles from him. Yet his behaviour was decent—a decency, however, that I might have seen to be struggled for—for he snatched my hand two or three times, with a vehemence in his grasp that hurt me; speaking words of tenderness through his shut teeth, as it seemed; and let it go with a beggar-voiced humble accent, like the vile woman's just before; half-inward; yet his words and manner carrying the appearance of strong, and almost convulsed passion!—O my dear! what mischief was he not then meditating!

I complained once or twice of thirst. My mouth seemed parched. At the time, I supposed that it was my terror (gasping often as I did for breath) that parched up the roof of my mouth. I called for water: some table-beer was brought me: beer, I suppose, was a better vehicle (if I were not dosed enough before) for their potions. I told the maid, that she knew I seldom tasted malt-liquor: yet, suspecting nothing of this nature, being extremely

thirsty, I drank it, as what came next: and instantly, as it were, found myself much worse than before: as if inebriated, I should fancy: I know not how.

His servant was gone twice as long as he needed: and just before his return, came one of the pretended Lady Betty's, with a letter for Mr. Lovelace.

He sent it up to me. I read it: and then it was that I thought myself a lost creature: it being to put off her going to Hampstead that night, on account of violent fits which Miss Montague was pretended to be seized with; for then immediately came into my head his vile attempt upon me in this house; the revenge that my flight might too probably inspire him with on that occasion, and because of the difficulty I made to forgive him, and to be reconciled to him: his very looks wild and dreadful to me; and the women of the house such as I had more reason than ever, even from the pretended Lady Betty's hint, to be afraid of: all these crowding together in my apprehensive mind, I fell into a kind of frenzy.

I have not remembrance how I was, for the time it lasted: but I know, that in my first agitations, I pulled off my head-dress and tore my ruffles in twenty tatters, and ran to find him out.

When a little recovered, I insisted upon the hint he had given of their coach. But the messenger, he said, had told him, that it was sent to fetch a physician, lest his chariot should be put up, or not ready.

I then insisted upon going directly to Lady Betty's lodgings.

Mrs. Leeson's was now a crowded house, he said; and as my earnestness could be owing to nothing but groundless apprehension, [and O what vows, what

protestations of his honour, did he then make!] He hoped I would not add to their present concern. Charlotte, indeed, was used to fits, he said, upon any great surprises, whether of joy or grief: and they would hold her for a week together, if not got off in a few hours.

You are an *observer of eyes*, my dear, said the villain: perhaps in secret insult: saw you not in Miss Montague's now and then at Hampstead, something wildish? I was afraid for her then. Silence and quiet only do her good: your concern for *her*, and her love for *you*, will but augment the poor girl's disorder, if you should go.

All impatient with grief and apprehension, I still declared myself resolved not to stay in that house till morning. All I had in the world, my rings, my watch, my little money for a coach: or if one were not to be got, I would go on foot to Hampstead that night, though I walked it by myself.

A coach was hereupon sent for, or pretended to be sent for. Any price, he said, he would give to oblige me, late as it was; and he would attend me with all his soul. But no coach was to be got.

Let me cut short the rest. I grew worse and worse in my head; now stupid, now raving, now senseless. The vilest of vile women was brought to frighten me. Never was there so horrible a creature, as she appeared to me at the time.

I remember, I pleaded for mercy. I remember that I said *I would be his—indeed I would be his*—to obtain his mercy. But no mercy found I! My strength, my intellects failed me—and then such scenes followed—O my dear, such dreadful scenes!—Fits upon fits (faintly indeed and imperfectly remembered) procuring me no compassion—but death was withheld from me. That would have been too great a mercy!

* * *

'Thus was I tricked and deluded back by blacker hearts of my own sex, than I thought there were in the world; who appeared to me to be persons of honour: and, when in his power, thus barbarously was I treated by this villanous man!

I was so senseless, that I dare not aver that the horrid creatures of the house were personally aiding and abetting: but some visionary remembrances I have of female figures, flitting, as I may say, before my sight; the wretched woman's particularly. But as these confused ideas might be owing to the terror I had conceived of the worse than masculine violence she had been permitted to assume to me, for expressing my abhorrence of her house; and as what I suffered from his barbarity wants not that aggravation; I will say no more on a subject so shocking as this must ever be to my remembrance.

I never saw the personating wretches afterwards. He persisted to the last (dreadfully invoking heaven as a witness to the truth of his assertion) that they were really and truly the ladies they pretended to be; declaring that they could not take leave of me, when they left the town, because of the state of senselessness and frenzy I was in. For their intoxicating, or rather stupifying potions had almost deleterious effects upon my intellects, as I have hinted; insomuch that, for several days together, I was under a strange delirium; now moping, now dozing, now weeping, now raving, now scribbling, tearing what I scribbled, as fast as I wrote it: *most* miserable when now and then a ray of reason brought confusedly to my remembrance what I had suffered.

LETTER XLVII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE. IN CONTINUATION.

The lady next gives an account,

Of her recovery from her delirium and sleepy disorder:

Of her attempt to get away in his absence:

Of the conversations that followed, at his return, between them:

Of the guilty figure he made:

Of her resolution not to have him:

Of her several efforts to escape:

Of her treaty with Dorcas to assist her in it:

Of Dorcas's dropping the promissory note, undoubtedly, as she says, on purpose to betray her:

Of her triumph over all the creatures of the house, assembled to terrify her; and perhaps to commit fresh outrages upon her:

Of his setting out for M. Hall:

Of his repeated letters to induce her to meet him at the altar, on her uncle's anniversary:

Of her determined silence to them all:

Of her second escape, effected, as she says, contrary to her own expectation: that attempt being at first but the intended prelude to a more promising one, which she had formed in her mind:

And of other particulars; which being to be found in Mr. Lovelace's letters preceding, and the letter of his friend Belford, are omitted. She then proceeds:

The very hour that I found myself in a place of safety, I took pen to write to you. When I began,

I designed only to write six or eight lines, to inquire after your health: for, having heard nothing from you, I feared *indeed*, that you *had been*, and *still were*, too ill to write. But no sooner did my pen begin to blot the paper, but my sad heart hurried it into length. The apprehensions I had lain under, that I should not be able to get away; the fatigue I had in effecting my escape: the difficulty of procuring a lodging for myself: having disliked the people of two houses, and those of a third disliking me; for you must think I made a frighted appearance—these, together with the recollection of what I suffered from him, and my further apprehensions of my insecurity, and my desolate circumstances, had so disordered me, that I remember I rambled strangely in that letter.

In short, I thought it, on re-perusal, a half-distracted one: but I then despaired (were I to begin again) of writing better: so I let it go: and can have no excuse for directing it as I did, if the cause of the incoherence in it will not furnish me with a very pitiable one.

The letter I received from your mother was a dreadful blow to me. But nevertheless it had the good effect upon me (labouring, as I did just then, under a violent fit of vapourish despondency, and almost yielding to it) which profuse bleeding and blisterings have in paralytical and apoplectical strokes; reviving my attention, and restoring me to spirits to combat the evils I was surrounded by—sluicing off, and diverting into a new channel (if I may be allowed another metaphor) the overcharging woes which threatened once more to overwhelm my intellects.

But yet I most sincerely lamented (and still lament) in your mother's words, *that I cannot be unhappy by myself*: and was grieved, not only for the

trouble I had given you before; but for the new one I had brought upon you by my inattention.

She then gives the substance of the letters she wrote to Mrs. Norton, to Lady Betty Lawrance, and to Mrs. Hodges; as also of their answers; whereby she detected all Mr. Lovelace's impostures. She proceeds as follows:

I cannot, however, forbear to wonder how the vile Tomlinson could come at the knowledge of several of the things he told me of, and which contributed to give me confidence in him *.

I doubt not that the stories of Mrs. Fretchville, and her house, would be found as vile impostures as any of the rest, were I to inquire; and had I not enough, and too much, already against the perjured man.

How have I been led on!—What will be the end of such a false and perjured creature! Heaven not less profaned and defied by him, than myself, deceived and abused! This, however, against myself, I must say, that if what I have suffered be the natural consequence of my first error, I never can forgive *myself*, although you are so partial in my favour as to say, that I was not censurable for what passed before my first escape.

And now, honoured madam, and my dearest Miss Howe, who are to sit in judgment upon my case, permit me to lay down my pen with one request, which, with the greatest earnestness, I make to you both: and that is, that you will neither of you open your lips in relation to the potions and the violences

* The attentive reader need not be referred back for what the lady nevertheless could not account for, as she knew not that Mr. Lovelace had come at Miss Howe's letters, particularly that in Vol. IV. p. 81, & seq. which he comments upon, p. 194, & seq. of the same volume.

I have hinted at.—Not that I am solicitous, that my disgrace should be hidden from the world, or that it should not be generally known, that the man has proved a villain to me: for this, it seems, every body but myself expected from his character. But suppose, as his actions by me are really of a *capital nature*, it were insisted upon, that I should appear to prosecute him, and his accomplices, in a court of justice, how do you think I could bear that?

But since my character, *before* the capital enormity, was lost in the eye of the world; and that from the very hour I left my father's house; and since all my own hopes of worldly happiness are entirely over; let me slide quietly into my grave; and let it not be remembered, except by one friendly tear, and no more, dropt from your gentle eye, mine own dear Anna Howe, on the happy day that shall shut up all my sorrows, that there was such a creature as

Saturday, July 8. CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XLVIII.

MISS HOWE TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Sunday, July 9.

May heaven signalize its vengeance in the face of all the world upon the most abandoned and profligate of men!—And in its own time, I doubt not but it will.—And we must look to a WORLD BEYOND THIS for the reward of your sufferings!

Another shocking detection my dear!—How have you been deluded!—Very watchful I have thought you; very sagacious:—but, alas! not

watchful, not sagacious enough, for the horrid villain you have had to deal with!——

The letter you sent me inclosed as mine, of the 7th of June, is a villanous forgery *. The hand, indeed, is astonishingly like mine; and the cover, I see, is actually my cover: but yet the letter is not so exactly imitated, but that (had you had any suspicions about his vileness at the time) you, who so well know my hand, might have detected it.

In short, this vile forged letter, though a long one, contains but a few extracts from mine. Mine was a *very* long one. He has omitted every thing, I see, in it, that could have shown you what a detestable house, the house is; and given you suspicions of the vile Tomlinson.—You will see this, and how he has turned Miss Lardner's information, and my advices to you, [execrable villain!] to his own horrid ends, by the rough draft of the genuine letter, which I shall inclose †.

Apprehensive for *both* our safeties from the villany of such a daring and profligate contriver, I must call upon you, my dear, to resolve upon taking legal vengeance of the infernal wretch. And this not only for our own sakes, but for the sakes of innocents who otherwise may yet be deluded and outraged by him.

She then gives the particulars of the report made by the young fellow whom she sent to Hampstead with her letter; and who supposed he had delivered it into her own hand ‡; and then proceeds:

I am astonished, that the vile wretch, who could know nothing of the time my messenger (whose

* See Vol. V. p. 166, & seq.
† Ibid. p. 30, & seq.
‡ Ibid. p. 259, & seq.

honesty I can vouch for) would come, could have a creature ready to personate you! Strange, that the man should happen to arrive just as you were gone to church, (as I find was the fact, on comparing what he says, with your hint that you were at church twice that day) when he might have got to Mrs. Moore's two hours before!—But had you told me, my dear, that the villain had found you out, and was about you!—You should have done that—yet I blame you upon a judgment founded on the *event* only!

I never had any faith in the stories that go current among country girls, of spectres, familiars, and demons; yet I see not any other way to account for this wretch's successful villany, and for his means of working up his specious delusions, but by supposing (if he be not the devil himself) that he has a familiar constantly at his elbow. Sometimes it seems to me, that this familiar assumes the shape of that solemn villain Tomlinson: sometimes that of the execrable Sinclair, as he calls her: sometimes it is permitted to take that of Lady Betty Lawrance—but, when it would assume the angelic shape and mien of my beloved friend, see what a bloated figure it made!

'Tis my opinion, my dear, that you will be no longer safe where you are, than while the V. is in the country. Words are poor!—or how could I execrate him! I have hardly any doubt, that he has sold himself for a time. O may the time be short!—Or may his infernal prompter no more keep covenant with him, than he does with others!

I enclose not only the rough draft of my long letter mentioned above; but the heads of that which the young fellow thought he delivered into your own hands at Hampstead. And when you have perused them, I will leave you to judge, how much

reason I had to be surprised, that you wrote me not an answer to either of those letters; one of which you owned you had received (though it proved to be his forged one): the other delivered into your own hands, as I was assured; and both of them of so much concern to your honour: and still how much more surprised I must be, when I received a letter from Mrs. Townsend, dated June 15, from Hampstead, importing, 'That Mr. Lovelace, who had been with you several days, had on the Monday before, brought Lady Betty and his cousin, richly dressed, and in a coach and four, to visit you: who, with your own consent, had carried you to town with them—to your former lodgings: where you still were: that the Hampstead women believed you to be married; and reflected upon me as a fomenter of differences between man and wife: that he himself was at Hampstead the day before; viz. Wednesday the 14th; and boasted of his happiness with you: inviting Mrs. Moore, Mrs. Bevis, and Miss Rawlins to go to town, to visit his spouse; which they promised to do: that he declared, that you were entirely reconciled to your former lodgings:—and that finally, the women at Hampstead told Mrs. Townsend, that he had very handsomely discharged theirs.'

I own to you, my dear, that I was so much surprised and disgusted at these appearances against a conduct till then unexceptionable, that I was resolved to make myself as easy as I could, and wait till you should think fit to write to me. But I could rein-in my impatience but for a few days; and on the 20th of June I wrote a sharp letter to you, which I find you did not receive.

What a fatality, my dear, has appeared in your case, from the very beginning till this hour! Had my mother permitted——

But can I blame *her*; when you have a *father* and *mother* living, who have so much to answer for? so much;—as no father and mother, considering the child they have driven, persecuted, exposed, renounced—ever had to answer for!

But again I must execrate the abandoned villain—yet, as I said before, *all* words are poor, and beneath the occasion.

But see we not, in the horrid perjuries and treachery of this man, what rakes and libertines will do, when they get a young creature into their power? It is probable, that he might have the intolerable presumption to hope an easier conquest: but, when your unexampled vigilance and exalted virtue made potions, and rapes, and the utmost violences, necessary to the attainment of his detestable end, we see that he never scrupled them. I have no doubt, that the same or equal wickedness would be *oftener* committed by men of his villanous cast, if the folly and credulity of the poor inconsiderates who throw themselves into their hands, did not give them an easier triumph.

With what comfort must those parents reflect upon these things, who have happily disposed of their daughters in marriage to a virtuous man! And how happy the young women who find themselves safe in a worthy protection!—If such a person as Miss Clarissa Harlowe could not escape, who can be secure?—Since, though every rake is not a LOVELACE, neither is every woman a Clarissa: and his attempts were but proportioned to your resistance and vigilance.

My mother has commanded me to let you know her thoughts upon the whole of your sad story. I will do it in another letter; and send it to you with this, by a special messenger.

But, for the future, if you approve of it, I will

send my letters by the usual hand (Collins's) to be left at the Saracen's Head, on Snow Hill: whither you may send yours as we both used to do, (to Wilson's) except such as we shall think fit to transmit by the post: which I am afraid, after my next, must be directed to Mr. Hickman, as before: since my mother is for fixing a condition to our correspondence, which, I doubt, you will not comply with, though I wish you would. This condition I shall acquaint you with by-and-by.

Meantime, begging excuse for all the harsh things in my last, of which your sweet meekness and superior greatness of soul have now made me most heartily ashamed, I beseech you, my dearest creature, to believe me to be,

Your truly sympathising
and unalterable friend,
ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XLIX.

MISS HOWE TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Monday, July 10.

I NOW, my dearest friend, resume my pen, to obey my mother, in giving you her opinion upon your unhappy story.

She still harps upon the old string, and will have it, that all your calamities are owing to your first fatal step; for she believes (what I cannot) that your relations had intended, after one general trial more, to comply with your aversion, if they had found it as riveted a one as, let me say, it was a folly to suppose it would not be found to be, after so many *ridiculously* repeated experiments.

As to your latter sufferings from that vilest of miscreants, she is unalterably of opinion, that if

all be as you have related (which she doubts not) with regard to the potions, and to the violences you have sustained, you ought, by all means, to set on foot a prosecution against him, and against his devilish accomplices.

She asks, what murderers, what ravishers, would be brought to justice, if *modesty* were to be a general plea, and allowable, against appearing in a court to prosecute?

She says, that the good of society requires, that such a beast of prey should be hunted out of it; and, if you do not prosecute him, she thinks you will be answerable for all the mischiefs he may do in the course of his future villanous life.

Will it be thought, Nancy, said she, that Miss Clarissa Harlowe can be in earnest, when she says, she is not solicitous to have her disgraces concealed from the world, if she be afraid or ashamed to appear in court, to do justice to herself and her sex against him? Will it not be rather surmised, that she may be apprehensive, that some weakness, or lurking love, will appear upon the trial of the strange cause? If, inferred she, such complicated villany as this (where perjury, potions, forgery, subornation, are all combined to effect the ruin of an innocent creature, and to dishonour a family of eminence, and where those very crimes, as may be supposed, are proofs of her innocence) is to go off with impunity, what case will deserve to be brought into judgment; or what malefactor ought to be hanged?

Then she thinks, and so do I, that the vile creatures his accomplices ought, by all means, to be brought to condign punishment, as they must and will be, upon bringing him to his trial: and this may be a means to blow up and root out a whole nest of vipers, and save many innocent creatures.

She added, that if Miss Clarissa Harlowe could be so indifferent about having this public justice done upon such a wretch for her *own* sake, she ought to overcome her scruples out of regard to her family, her acquaintance, and her sex, which are all highly injured and scandalized by his villany to her.

For her own part, she declares, that were *she* your mother, she would forgive you upon no other terms: and, upon your compliance with these, she herself will undertake to reconcile all your family to you.

These, my dear, are my mother's sentiments upon your sad story.

I cannot say, but there are reason and justice in them: and it is my opinion, that it would be very right for the law to *oblige* an injured woman to prosecute, and to make seduction, on the man's part capital, where *his* studied baseness, and no fault in *her will*, appeared.

To this purpose the custom in the Isle of Man is a very good one—

'If a single woman there prosecutes a single man for a rape, the ecclesiastical judges impannel a jury; and, if this jury find him guilty, he is returned *guilty* to the temporal courts: where, if he be convicted, the deemster, or judge, delivers to the woman a rope, a sword, and a ring; and she has it in her choice to have him hanged, beheaded, or to marry him.'

One of the two former, I think, should always be her option.

I long for the full particulars of your story. You must have but too much time upon your hands, for a mind so active as yours, if tolerable health and spirits be afforded you.

The villany of the worst of men, and the virtue

of the most excellent of women, I expect will be exemplified in it, were it to be written in the same connected and particular manner in which you used to write to me.

Try for it, my dearest friend; and since you cannot give the *example* without the *warning*, give *both*, for the sakes of all those who shall hear of your unhappy fate; beginning from yours of June 5, your prospects then not disagreeable. I pity you for the task; though I cannot willingly exempt you from it.

* * *

My mother will have me add, that she must *insist* upon your prosecuting the villain. She repeats that she makes that a condition on which she permits our future correspondence. Let me therefore know your thoughts upon it. I asked her, if she would be willing that I should appear to support you in court, if you complied?—By all means she said, if that would induce you to begin with him, and with the horrid women. I think I could attend you, I am *sure* I could, were there but a probability of bringing the monster to his deserved end.

Once more your thoughts of it, supposing it were to meet with the approbation of your relations.

But whatever be your determination on this head, it shall be my constant prayer, that God will give you patience to bear your heavy afflictions, as a person ought to do who has not brought them upon herself by a faulty will: that he will speak peace and comfort to your wounded mind; and give you many happy years. I am, and ever will be,

Your affectionate and faithful

ANNA HOWE.

The two preceding letters were sent by a special messenger: in the cover were written the following lines:

Monday, July 10.

I CANNOT, my dearest friend, suffer the inclosed, to go unaccompanied by a few lines, to signify to you, that they are both less tender in some places, than I would have written, had they not been to pass my mother's inspection. The principal reason, however, of my writing thus separately, is to beg of you to permit me to send you money and necessaries; which you must needs want: and that you will let me know, if either I, or *any body I can influence,* can be of service to you. I am excessively apprehensive, that you are not enough out of the villain's reach where you are. Yet London, I am persuaded, is the place of all others to be private in.

I could tear my hair for vexation, that I have it not in my power to afford you *personal* protection! —I am,

Your ever devoted

ANNA HOWE.

Once more forgive me, my dearest creature, for my barbarous tauntings in mine of the 5th! yet I can hardly forgive myself. I to be so cruel, yet to know you so well!— Whence, whence, had I this vile impatiency of spirit!—

THE TANJORE ... SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

LETTER L.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Tuesday, July 11.

Forgive you, my dear!—most cordially do I forgive you—will you forgive me for some sharp things I wrote in return to yours of the 5th? You could not have loved me as you do, nor had the concern you have always shown for my honour, if you had not been utterly displeased with me, on the appearance which my conduct wore to you when you wrote that letter. I most heartily thank you, my best and only love, for the opportunity you gave me of clearing it up: and for being generously ready to acquit me of intentional blame, the moment you had read my melancholy narrative.

As you are so earnest to have all the particulars of my sad story before you, I will, if life and spirits be lent me, give you an ample account of all that has befallen me, from the time you mention. But this, it is very probable, you will not see, till after the close of my last scene: and as I shall write with a view to that, I hope no other voucher will be wanted for the veracity of the writer, be who will the reader.

I am far from thinking myself out of the reach of this man's further violence. But what can I do? Whither can I fly?—Perhaps my bad state of health (which must grow worse, as recollection of the past evils, and reflections upon them, grow heavier and heavier upon me) may be my protection. Once, indeed, I thought of going abroad; and had I the prospect of many years before me, I would go—but, my dear, the blow is given.—Nor

have you reason, now, circumstanced as I am, to be concerned that it is. What a heart must I have, if it be not broken!—And indeed, my *dear* friend, I do so earnestly wish for the last closing scene, and with so much comfort find myself in a declining way, that I even sometimes ungratefully regret that naturally healthy constitution, which used to double upon me all my enjoyments.

As to the earnestly recommended prosecution, I may possibly touch upon it more largely hereafter, if ever I shall have better spirits: for they are at present extremely sunk and low. But, just now, I will only say, that I would sooner suffer every evil (the repetition of the capital one excepted) than appear publicly in a court to do myself justice *. And I am heartily grieved, that your mother prescribes such a measure as the condition of our future correspondence: for the continuance of your friendship, my dear, and the desire I had to correspond with you to my life's end, were all my remaining hopes and consolation. Nevertheless, as that friendship is in the power of the *heart*, not of the *hand* only, I hope I shall not forfeit that.

O my dear! what would I give to obtain a revocation of my father's malediction! A reconciliation is not to be hoped for. You, who never loved my father, may think my solicitude on this head a weakness: but the *motive* for it, sunk as my spirits *at times* are, is not *always* weak.

* * *

I approve of the method you prescribe for the conveyance of our letters; and have already caused the porter of the inn to be engaged to bring to me

* Dr Lewen, in Letter lviii. of Vol. VII. presses her to this public prosecution, by arguments worthy of his character; which she answers in a manner worthy of hers. See Letter lix. of that Volume.

yours, the moment that Collins arrives with them. And the servant of the house where I am, will be permitted to carry mine to Collins for you.

I have written a letter to Miss Rawlins of Hampstead; the answer to which, just now received, has helped me to the knowledge of the vile contrivance, by which this wicked man got your letter of June the 10th. I will give you the contents of both.

In mine to her, I briefly acquainted her, 'with what had befallen me, through the vileness of the women who had been passed upon me, as the aunt and cousin of the wickedest of men; and own, that I never was married to him. I desire her to make particular inquiry, and to let me know, who it was at Mrs. Moore's, that on Sunday afternoon, June 11, while I was at church, received a letter from Miss Howe, pretending to be me, and lying on a couch:—which letter, had it come to my hands, would have saved me from ruin. I excuse myself (on the score of the delirium, which the horrid usage I had received threw me into, and from a confinement as barbarous as illegal) that I had not before applied to Mrs. Moore, for an account of what I was indebted to her: which account I now desired. And, for fear of being traced by Mr. Lovelace, I directed her to superscribe her answer, To Mrs. Mary Atkins; to be left till called for, at the Belle Savage-inn, on Ludgate Hill.'

In her answer, she tells me, 'that the vile wretch prevailed upon Mrs. Bevis to personate me, [a sudden motion of his, it seems, on the appearance of your messenger] and persuaded her to lie along on a couch: a handkerchief over her neck and face; pretending to be ill; the credulous woman drawn in by false notions of your ill offices to keep up a variance between a man and his wife—and so taking the letter from your messenger as me.

'Miss Rawlins takes pains to excuse Mrs. Bevis's intention. She expresses their astonishment and concern at what I communicate: but is glad, however, and so they are all, that they know in time the vileness of the base man; the two widows and herself having, at his earnest invitation, designed me a visit at Mrs. Sinclair's; supposing all to be happy between him and me; as he assured them was the case. Mr. Lovelace, she informs me, had handsomely satisfied Mrs. Moore. And Miss Rawlins concludes with wishing to be favoured with the particulars of so extraordinary a story, as these particulars may be of use, to let her see what wicked creatures (women as well as men) there are in the world.'

I thank you, my dear, for the draughts of your two letters which were intercepted by this horrid man. I see the great advantage they were of to him, in the prosecution of his villanous designs against the poor wretch whom he has so long made the sport of his abhorred inventions.

Let me repeat, that I am quite sick of life; and of an earth, in which *innocent* and *benevolent* spirits are sure to be considered as *aliens*, and to be made sufferers by the *genuine sons* and *daughters* of *that earth.*

How unhappy, that those letters only which could have acquainted me with his horrid views, and armed me against them, and against the vileness of the base women, should fall into his hands! —Unhappier still, in that my very escape to Hampstead, gave him the opportunity of receiving them!

Nevertheless, I cannot but still wonder, how it was possible for that Tomlinson to know what passed between Mr. Hickman and my uncle Har-

lowe *; a circumstance, which gave the vile impostor most of his credit with me.

How the wicked wretch himself could find me out at Hampstead, must also remain wholly a mystery to me. He *may* glory in his contrivance.—He, who has more wickedness than wit, *may* glory in his contrivances!—But, after all, I shall, I humbly presume to hope, be happy, when he, poor wretch, will be—alas!—who can say what?——

Adieu, my dearest friend!—may you be happy!—and then your Clarissa cannot be wholly miserable.

LETTER LI.

MISS HOWE TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Wedn. night, July 12.

I WRITE, my dearest creature, I cannot *but* write, to express my concern on your dejection. Let me beseech you, my charming excellence, let me beseech you, not to give way to it.

Comfort yourself, on the contrary, in the triumphs of a virtue unsullied; a will wholly faultless. Who could have withstood the trials that you have surmounted?—Your cousin Morden will soon come. He will see justice done you, I make no doubt, as well with regard to what concerns your person as your estate. And many happy days may you yet see: and much good may you still do, if you will not heighten unavoidable accidents into guilty despondency.

But why, my dear, this pining solicitude continued after a reconciliation with relations as unwor-

* See the note at the bottom of p. 191.

thy as implacable; whose wills are governed by an all-grasping brother, who finds his account in keeping the breach open? On this over-solicitude it is now plain to me, that the vilest of men built all his schemes. He saw that you thirsted after it, beyond all reason for hope. The view, the hope, I own, extremely desirable, had your family been Christians; or even had they been Pagans who had bowels.

I shall send this short letter [I am obliged to make it a short one] by *young* Rogers, as we call him; the fellow I sent to you to Hampstead; an innocent, though pragmatical rustic. Admit him, I pray you, into your presence, that he may report to me how you look, and how you are.

Mr. Hickman should attend you: but I apprehend, that all his motions, and my own too, are watched by the execrable wretch: as indeed his are by an agent of mine: for I own, that I am so apprehensive of his plots and revenge, now I know that he has intercepted my vehement letters against him, that he is the subject of my dreams, as well as of my waking fears.

* * *

My mother, at my earnest importunity, has just given me leave to write, and to receive your letters —but fastened this condition upon the concession, that yours must be under cover to Mr. Hickman [this with a view, I suppose, to give him consideration with me]; and upon this further condition, that she is to see all we write.—'When girls are set upon a point,' she told one, who told me again, 'it is better for a mother, if possible, to make herself of their party, than to oppose them: since there will be then hopes that she will still hold the reins in her own hands.'

Pray let me know what the people are with

whom you lodge?—Shall I send Mrs. Townsend to direct you to lodgings either more safe or more convenient for you?

Be pleased to write to me by Rogers; who will wait on you for your answer, at your own time.

Adieu, my dearest creature. Comfort *yourself*, as you would in the like unhappy circumstances comfort

Your own
ANNA HOWE.

LETTER LII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Thursday, July 13.

I AM extremely concerned, my dear Miss Howe, for being primarily the occasion of the apprehensions you have of this wicked man's vindictive attempts. What a wide-spreading error is mine!—

If I find that he sets on foot any machination against you, or against Mr. Hickman, I do assure you I will consent to prosecute him, although I were sure I should not survive my first appearance at the bar he should be arraigned at.

I own the justice of your mother's arguments on that subject; but must say, that I think there are circumstances in my particular case, which will excuse me, although on a slighter occasion than that you are apprehensive of I should decline to appear against him. I have said, that I may one day enter more particularly into this argument.

Your messenger has now *indeed* seen me. I talked with him on the cheat put upon him at Hampstead: and am sorry to have reason to say, that had not the poor young man been very *simple*, and very

self-sufficient, he had not been so grossly deluded. Mrs. Bevis has the same plea to make for herself. A good-natured, thoughtless woman; not used to converse with so vile and so specious a deceiver as him, who made his advantage of both these shallow creatures.

I think I cannot be more private than where I am. I hope I am safe. All the risk I run, is in going out, and returning from morning prayers; which I have two or three times ventured to do; once at Lincoln's-Inn chapel, at eleven; once at St. Dunstan's, Fleet Street, at seven in the morning *, in a chair both times; and twice at six in the morning, at the neighbouring church in Covent Garden. The wicked wretches I have escaped from, will not, I hope, come to church to look for me; especially at so early prayers; and I have fixed upon the privatest pew in the latter *church* to hide myself in; and perhaps I may lay out a little matter in an ordinary gown, by way of disguise; my face half hid by my cap.—I am very careless, my dear, of my appearance now. Neat and clean, takes up the whole of my attention.

The man's name at whose house I lodge, is Smith—a glove *maker*, as well as *seller*. His wife is the shop-keeper. A dealer also in stockings, ribbons, snuff, and perfumes. A matron-like woman, plain-hearted, and prudent. The husband an honest, industrious man. And they live in good understanding with each other: a proof with me, that their hearts are right; for where a married couple live together upon ill terms, it is a sign, I think, that each knows something amiss of the other, either with regard to temper or morals, which if the world

* The seven o'clock prayers at St. Dunstan's have been since discontinued.

knew as well as themselves, it would perhaps as little like them, as such people like each other. Happy the marriage, where neither man nor wife has any wilful or premeditated evil in their general conduct to reproach the other with!—For even persons who have bad hearts will have a veneration for those who have good ones.

Two neat rooms, with plain, but clean furniture, on the first floor, are mine; one they call the dining-room.

There is, up another pair of stairs, a very worthy widow lodger, Mrs. Lovick by name; who, although of low fortunes, is much respected, as Mrs. Smith assures me, by people of condition of her acquaintance, for her piety, prudence, and understanding. With her I propose to be well acquainted.

I thank you, my dear, for your kind, your seasonable advice and consolation. I hope I shall have more grace given me, than to despond, in the *religious* sense of the word: especially, as I can apply to myself the comfort you give me, that neither my will, nor my inconsiderateness, has contributed to my calamity. But, nevertheless, the irreconcileableness of my relations, whom I love with an unabated reverence; my apprehensions of fresh violences [this wicked man, I doubt, will not yet let me rest]; my being destitute of protection; my youth, my sex, my unacquaintedness with the world, subjecting me to insults: my reflections on the scandal I have given, added to the sense of the indignities I have received from a man, of whom I deserved not ill; all together will undoubtedly bring on the effect, that cannot be undesirable to me.—The slower, however, perhaps from my natural good constitution; and, as I presume to imagine, from principles which I hope will, in due

time, and by due reflection, set me *above the sense of all worldly disappointments*.

At present, my head is much disordered. I have not indeed enjoyed it with any degree of clearness, since the violence done to that, and to my heart too, by the wicked arts of the abandoned creatures I was cast among.

I must have more conflicts. At times I find myself not subdued enough to my condition. I will welcome those conflicts as they come, as *probationary* ones—but yet my father's malediction—the temporary part so strangely and so literally completed!—I cannot, however, think, when my mind is *strongest*—but what is the story of Isaac, and Jacob, and Esau, and of Rebekah's cheating the latter of the blessing designed for him (in favour of Jacob) given us for in the 27th chapter of Genesis? My father used, I remember, to enforce the doctrine deducible from it, on his children, by many arguments. At least therefore, *he* must believe there is great weight in the curse he has announced; and shall I not be solicitous to get it revoked, that he may not hereafter be grieved, for my sake, that he did *not* revoke it?

All I will at present add, are my thanks to your mother for her indulgence to us. Due compliments to Mr. Hickman; and my request that you will believe me to be, to my last hour, and beyond it, if possible, my beloved friend, and my *dearer* self (for what is now my self!)

Your obliged and affectionate

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER LIII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Friday, July 7.

I HAVE three of thy letters at once before me to answer; in each of which thou complainest of my silence; and in one of them tellest me, that thou canst not live without I scribble to thee every day, or every other day at least.

Why, then, die, Jack, if thou wilt. What heart, thinkest thou, can I have to write, when I have lost the only subject worth writing upon?

Help me again to my angel, to my CLARISSA: and thou shalt have a letter from me, or writing at least, part of a letter, every hour. All that the charmer of my heart shall say, that will I put down: every motion, every air of her beloved person, every look will I try to describe; and when she is silent, I will endeavour to tell thee her thoughts, either what they are, or what I would have them to be—so that, having *her*, I shall never want a subject. Having lost her, my whole soul is a blank: the whole creation round me, the elements above, beneath, and every thing I *behold* (for nothing can I *enjoy*) are a blank without her.

O return, return, thou only charmer of my soul! Return to thy adoring Lovelace! What is the light, what the air, what the town, what the country, what's any thing, without thee? Light, air, joy, harmony, in my notion, are but parts of thee; and could they be all expressed in one word, that word would be CLARISSA.

O my beloved CLARISSA, return thou then; once more return to bless thy LOVELACE, who now,

by the loss of thee, knows the value of the jewel he has slighted; and rises every morning but to curse the sun that shines upon every body but him!

* * *

Well, but, Jack, 'tis a surprising thing to me, that the dear fugitive cannot be met with: cannot be heard of. She is so poor a plotter (for plotting is not her talent) that I am confident, had I been at liberty, I should have found her out before now; although the different emissaries I have employed about town, round the adjacent villages, and in Miss Howe's vicinage, have hitherto failed of success. But my lord continues so weak and low-spirited, that there is no getting from him. I would not disoblige a man whom I think in danger still: for would his gout, now it has got him down, but give him, like a fair boxer, the rising blow, all would be over with him. And here [pox of his fondness for me! it happens at a very bad time] he makes me sit hours together entertaining him with my rogueries (a pretty amusement for a sick man!) And yet whenever he has the gout, he prays night and morning with his chaplain. But what must *his* notions of religion be, who, after he has nosed and mumbled over his responses, can give a sigh or groan of satisfaction, as if he thought he had made up with heaven; and return with a new appetite to my stories?—Encouraging them, by shaking his sides with laughing at them, and calling me a sad fellow in such an accent, as shows he takes no small delight in his nephew.

The old peer has been a sinner in his day, and suffers for it now: a sneaking sinner, *sliding*, rather than *rushing*, into vices, for fear of his reputation: or, rather, for fear of detection, and positive proof; for these sort of fellows, Jack, have no

real regard for reputation.—Paying for what he never had, and never daring to rise to the joy of an enterprise at first hand, which could bring him within view of a tilting, or of the honour of being considered as the principal man in a court of justice.

To see such an old Trojan as this, just dropping into the grave, which I hoped ere this would have been dug, and filled up with him; crying out with pain, and grunting with weakness; yet in the same moment crack his leathern face into an horrible laugh, and call a young sinner charming varlet, encoreing him, as formerly he used to do the Italian eunuchs; what a preposterous, what an unnatural adherence to old habits!

My two cousins are generally present when I *entertain*, as the old peer calls it. Those stories must drag horribly, that have not more hearers and applauders, than relaters.

Applauders!

Ay, Belford, *applauders*, repeat I; for although these girls pretend to blame me sometimes for the *facts*, they praise my manner, my invention, my intrepidity.—Besides, what other people call *blame*, that call I *praise*: I ever did; and so I very early discharged *shame*, that cold-water damper to an enterprising spirit.

These are smart girls; they have life and wit; and yesterday, upon Charlotte's raving against me upon a related enterprise, I told her, that I had had it in debate several times, whether she were or were not too near of kin to me: and that it was once a moot point with me, whether I could not love her dearly for a month or so: and perhaps it was well for her, that another pretty little puss started up, and diverted me, just as I was entering upon the course.

They all three held up their hands and eyes at once. But I observed, that though the girls exclaimed against me, they were not so angry at this plain speaking, as I have found my beloved upon hints so dark, that I have wondered at her quick apprehension.

I told Charlotte, that, grave as she pretended to be in her *smiling* resentments on this declaration, I was sure I should not have been put to the expense of above two or three stratagems, (for nobody admired a good invention more than she) could I but have disentangled her conscience from the embarrasses of consanguinity.

She pretended to be highly displeased: so did her sister for her. I told her, that she seemed as much in earnest as if she had thought *me* so; and *dared* the trial. Plain words, I said, in these cases, were more shocking to their sex than gradatim actions. And I bid Patty not be displeased at my distinguishing her sister; since I had a great respect for *her* likewise.

An Italian air, in my usual careless way, a half-struggled-for kiss from me, and a shrug of the shoulder by way of admiration, from each pretty cousin, and Sad, sad fellow, from the old peer, attended with a side-shaking laugh, made us all friends.

There, Jack!—Wilt thou, or wilt thou not, take this for a letter? There's quantity, I am sure.—How have I filled a sheet (not a short-hand one indeed) without a subject! My fellow shall take this; for he is going to town. And if thou canst think tolerably of such execrable stuff, I will soon send thee another.

LETTER LIV.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Six, Saturday morning, July 8.

Have I nothing new, nothing diverting in my whimsical way, thou askest, in one of thy three letters before me, to entertain thee with?—And thou tellest me, that, when I have least to *narrate* to speak in the Scottish phrase, I am most diverting. A pretty compliment, either to thyself, or to me. To *both* indeed!—A sign that thou hast as frothy a heart as I a head. But canst thou suppose, that this admirable woman is not all, is not every thing with me? Yet I dread to think of her too; for detection of all my contrivances, I doubt, must come next.

The old peer is also full of Miss Harlowe: and so are my cousins. He hopes I will not be such a dog [there's a specimen of his peer-like dialect] as to think of doing dishonourably by a woman of so much merit, beauty, and fortune; and *he* says of so good a family. But I tell him, that this is a string he must not touch; that it is a very tender point: in short is my sore place; and that I am afraid he would handle it too roughly, were I to put myself in the power of so ungentle an operator.

He shakes his crazy head. He thinks all is not as it should be between us; longs to have me present her to him as my wife; and often tells me what great things he will do, additional to his former proposals; and what presents he will make on the birth of the first child. But I hope the whole of his estate will be in my hands before such an event takes place. No harm in *hoping*, Jack! Lord M. says, *were it not for hope, the heart would break.*

* * *

Eight o'clock at midsummer, and these lazy varletesses (in full health) not come down yet to breakfast! — What a confounded indecency in young ladies, to let a rake know that they love their beds so dearly, and, at the same time, *where to have them!* But I'll punish them—they shall breakfast with their old uncle, and yawn at one another as if for a wager; while I drive my phaeton to Colonel Ambrose's, who yesterday gave me an invitation both to breakfast and dine, on account of two Yorkshire nieces, celebrated toasts, who have been with him this fortnight past; and who, he says, want to see *me*. So, Jack, all women do not run away from me, thank heaven!—I wish I could have leave of my heart, since the dear fugitive is so ungrateful, to drive her out of it with another beauty. But who can supplant her? Who can be admitted to a place in it after Miss Clarissa Harlowe?

At my return, if I can find a subject, I will scribble on, to oblige thee.

My phaeton's ready. My cousins send me word they are just coming down: so in spite I'll be gone.

Saturday afternoon.

I did stay to dine with the colonel, and his lady, and nieces: but I could not pass the afternoon with them, for the heart of me. There was enough in the persons and faces of the two young ladies to set me upon comparisons. Particular features held my attention for a few moments: but these served but to whet my impatience to find the charmer of my soul; who, for person, for air, for mind, never had any equal. My heart recoiled and sickened upon comparing minds and conversation. Pert wit,

a too studied desire to please; each in high good humour with herself; an open-mouth affectation in both, to show white teeth, as if the principal excellence; and to invite amorous familiarity, by the promise of a sweet breath; at the same time reflecting tacitly upon breaths arrogantly implied to be less pure.

Once I could have borne them.

They seemed to be disappointed that I was so soon able to leave them. Yet have I not at present so much vanity [my Clarissa has cured me of my vanity] as to attribute their disappointment so much to particular liking of me, as to their own self-admiration. They looked upon me as a connoisseur in beauty. They would have been proud of engaging my attention, as such: but so affected, so flimsy-witted, mere skin-deep beauties!—They had looked no further into themselves than what their glasses had enabled them to see: and their glasses were flattering glasses too; for I thought them passive-faced, and spiritless; with eyes, however, upon the hunt for conquests, and bespeaking the attention of others, in order to countenance their own.—I believe I could, with a little pains, have given them life and soul, and to every feature of their faces sparkling information—but my Clarissa!—O Belford, my Clarissa has made me eyeless and senseless to every other beauty!—Do thou find her for me, as a subject worthy of my pen, or this shall be the last from thy

LOVELACE.

LETTER LV.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Sunday night, July 9.

Now, Jack, have I a subject with a vengeance. I am in the very height of my trial for all my sins to my beloved fugitive. For here to-day, at about five o'clock, arrived Lady Sarah Sadleir and Lady Betty Lawrance, each in her chariot and six. Dowagers love equipage; and these cannot travel ten miles without a set, and half a dozen horse-men.

My time had hung heavy upon my hands; and so I went to church after dinner. Why may not handsome fellows, thought I, like to be looked at, as well as handsome girls? I fell in, when service was over, with Major Warneton; and so came not home till after six; and was surprised, at entering the court-yard here, to find it littered with equipages and servants. I was sure the owners of them came for no good to me.

Lady Sarah, I soon found, was raised to this visit by Lady Betty; who has health enough to allow her to look out of herself, and out of her own affairs, for business. Yet congratulation to Lord M. on his amendment [spiteful devils on both accounts!] was the avowed errand. But coming in my absence, I was their principal subject; and they had opportunity to set each other's heart against me.

Simon Parsons hinted this to me, as I passed by the steward's office; for it seems they talked loud; and he was making up some accounts with old Pritchard.

However, I hastened to pay my duty to them.—Other people not performing theirs, is no excuse for the neglect of our own, you know.

And now I enter upon my Trial.

With horrible grave faces was I received. The two antiques only bowed their tabby heads; making longer faces than ordinary; and all the old lines appearing strong in their furrowed foreheads and fallen cheeks; How do you, sir? and, How do you, Mr. Lovelace? looking all round at one another, as who should say, do you speak first: and, do you: for they seemed resolved to lose no time.

I had nothing for it, but an air as manly, as theirs was womanly. Your servant, madam, to Lady Betty; and, Your servant, madam—I am glad to see you abroad, to Lady Sarah.

I took my seat. Lord M. looked horribly glum; his fingers claspt, and turning round and round, under and over, his but just disgouted thumbs; his sallow face, and goggling eyes, cast upon the floor, on the fire-place, on his two sisters, on his two nieces, by turns, but not once deigning to look upon me.

Then I began to think of the laudanum, and wet cloth, I told thee of long ago; and to call myself in question for a tenderness of heart that will never do me good.

At last, Mr. Lovelace! — Cousin Lovelace!—Hem!—Hem!—I am sorry, very sorry, hesitated Lady Sarah, that there is no hope of your ever taking up—

What's the matter *now*, madam?

The matter now! — Why, Lady Betty has two letters from Miss Harlowe, which have told us what's the matter—are all women alike with you?

Yes; I could have answered; bating the difference which pride makes.

Then they all chorus'd upon me—Such a character as Miss Harlowe's! cried one—A lady of so much generosity and good sense! another—How charmingly she writes! the two maiden monkies, looking at her fine hand-writing: her perfections my crimes. What can you expect will be the end of these things! cried Lady Sarah. D—n'd, d—n'd doings! vociferated the peer, shaking his loose flesh'd wabbling chaps, which hung on his shoulders like an old cow's dewlap.

For my part, I hardly knew whether to sing or say, what I had to reply to these all-at-once attacks upon me!—Fair and softly, ladies—one at a time, I beseech you. I am not to be hunted down without being heard, I hope. Pray let me see these letters. I beg you will let me see them.

There they are:—that's the first—read it out, if you can.

I open'd a letter from my charmer, dated *Thursday June* 29, our wedding-day, that was to be, and written to Lady Betty Lawrance. By the contents, to my great joy, I find the dear creature is alive and well, and in charming spirits. But the direction where to send an answer was so scratched out, that I could not read it; which afflicted me much.

She puts three questions in it to Lady Betty.

1st, About a letter of hers, dated *June* 7, congratulating me on my nuptials, and which I was so good as to save Lady Betty the trouble of writing—a very civil thing of me, I think!

Again—'Whether she and one of her nieces Montague were to go to town, on an old chancery suit?'—And, 'Whether they actually did go to town accordingly, and to Hampstead afterwards?' and, 'Whether they brought to town from thence

the young creature whom they visited;' was the subject of the second and third questions.

A little inquisitive dear rogue! and what did she expect to be the better for these questions?——But curiosity, d—n'd curiosity, is the itch of the sex—yet when didst thou know it turned to their benefit?—For they seldom inquire, but when they fear—and the proverb, as my lord has it, says, *it comes with a fear.* That is, I suppose, what they fear generally happens, because there is generally occasion for the fear.

Curiosity indeed she avows to be her only motive for these interrogatories: for though she says, her ladyship may suppose the questions are not asked for good to *me,* yet the answer can do me no harm, nor her good, only to give her to understand—whether I have told her a parcel of d—n'd lies; that's the plain English of her inquiry.

Well, madam, said I, with as much philosophy as I could assume; and may I ask—pray, what was your ladyship's answer?

There's a copy of it, tossing it to me, very disrespectfully.

This answer was dated *July* 1. A very kind and complaisant one to the lady, but very so-so to her poor kinsman—that people can give up their own flesh and blood with so much ease!—She tells her 'how proud all our family would be of an alliance with such an excellence.' She does me justice in saying how much I adore her, as an angel of a woman; and begs of her, for I know not how many sakes, besides my soul's sake, 'that she will be so good as to have me for an husband:' and answers—thou wilt guess how—to the lady's questions.

Well, madam; and pray, may I be favoured with the lady's other letter? I presume it is in reply to yours.

It is, said the peer; but, sir, let me ask you a few questions, before you read it—give *me* the letter, Lady Betty.

There it is, my lord.

Then on went the spectacles, and his head moved to the lines—A charming pretty hand!—I have often heard, that this lady is a *genus*.

And so, Jack, repeating my lord's wise comments and questions will let thee into the contents of this merciless letter.

'*Monday, July* 3' [reads my lord]—let me see!—That was last *Monday;* no longer ago! '*Monday, July the third*—madam—I cannot excuse myself'—um, um, um, um, um, um, [humming inarticulately, and skipping] 'I must own to you, 'madam, that the honour of being related'—

Off went the spectacles—Now, tell me, sir-r, has not this lady lost all the friends she had in the world, for your sake?

She has very implacable friends, my lord: we all know that.

But has she not lost them all for your sake?—Tell me that.

I believe so, my lord.

Well then!—I am glad thou art not so graceless as to deny that.

On went the spectacles again—'I must own to you, madam, that the honour of being related to ladies as eminent for their virtue, as for their descent.'—*Very pretty, truly!* said my lord, repeating '*as eminent for their virtue as for their descent*, was, at first, no small inducement with me to lend an ear to Mr. Lovelace's address.'

There is dignity, born dignity, in this lady, cried my lord.

Lady Sarah. She would have been a grace to our family.

Lady Betty. Indeed she would.

Lovel. To a *royal* family, I will venture to say.

Lord M. Then what a devil—

Lovel. Please to read on, my lord. It cannot be *her* letter, if it does not make you admire her more and more as you read. Cousin Charlotte, cousin Patty, pray attend—read on, my lord.

Miss Charlotte. Amazing fortitude!

Miss Patty only lifted up her dove's eyes.

Lord M. [reading] 'And the rather, as I was determined, had it come to effect, to do every thing in my power to deserve your favourable opinion.'

Then again they chorus'd upon me!

A blessed time of it, poor I!—I had nothing for it but impudence!

Lovel. Pray read on, my lord—I told you how you would all admire her—or, shall I read?

Lord M. D—n'd assurance! [then reading] 'I had another motive, which I knew would of itself give me merit with your whole family [*they were all ear*]: a presumptuous one; a punishably presumptuous one, as it has proved: in the hope that I might be an humble means in the hand of Providence, to reclaim a man who had, as I thought, good sense enough at bottom to be reclaimed; or at least gratitude enough to acknowledge the intended obligation, whether the generous hope were to succeed or not.'—Excellent young creature!—

Excellent young creature! echoed the ladies, with their handkerchiefs at their eyes, attended with nose-music.

Lovel. By my soul, Miss Patty, you weep in the wrong place: you shall never go with me to a tragedy.

Lady Betty. Hardened wretch!

His lordship had pulled off his spectacles to wipe them. His eyes were misty; and he thought the fault in his spectacles.

I saw they were all cocked and primed—To be

sure that is a very pretty sentence, said I—that is the excellency of this lady, that in every line, as she writes on, she improves upon herself. Pray, my lord, proceed—I know her style; the next sentence will still rise upon us.

Lord M. D—n'd fellow! [again saddling, and reading] 'But I have been most egregiously mistaken in Mr. Lovelace!'—[Then they all clamoured again] 'The *only* man, I persuade myself—'

Lovel. Ladies may persuade themselves to any thing: but how can she answer for what *other* men would or would not have done in the same circumstances?

I was forced to say any thing to stifle their outcries. Pox take ye all together, thought I; as if I had not vexation enough in losing her!

Lord M. [reading] 'The only man, I persuade myself, pretending to be a gentleman, in whom I could have been so much mistaken.

They were all beginning again—Pray, my lord, proceed!—hear, hear—pray, ladies, hear!—Now, my lord, be pleased to proceed. The ladies are silent.

So they were; lost in admiration of me, hands and eyes uplifted.

Lord M. I will to thy confusion; for he had looked over the next sentence.

What wretches, Belford, what spiteful wretches, are poor mortals!—So rejoiced to sting one another! to see each other stung!

Lord M. [reading] 'For while I was endeavouring to save a drowning wretch, I have been, not accidentally, but premeditatedly, and of set purpose, drawn in after him.'—What say you to this, sir-r?

Lady S.
Lady B. } Ay, sir, what say you to this?

Lovel. Say! why I say it is a very pretty metaphor, if it would but hold—but, if you please, my lord, read on. Let me hear what is further said, and I will speak to it all together.

Lord M. I will. 'And he has had the glory to add to the list of those he has ruined, a name that I will be bold to say, would not have disparaged his own.'

They all looked at me, as expecting me to speak.

Lovel. Be pleased to proceed, my lord: I will speak to this by and by—how came she to know, I *kept a list?*—I will speak to this by and by.

Lord M. [reading on] 'And this, madam, by means that would shock humanity to be made acquainted with.'

Then again, in a hurry, off went the spectacles.

This was a plaguy stroke upon me. I thought myself an oak in impudence; but, by my troth, this had almost felled me.

Lord M. What say you to this, SIR-R!

Remember, Jack, to read all their *sirs* in this dialogue with a double *rr, sir-r!* denoting indignation rather than respect.

They all looked at me, as if to see if I could blush.

Lov. Eyes off, my lord!—eyes off, ladies! [looking bashfully, I believe]—what say I to this, my lord!—Why, I say, that this lady has a strong manner of expressing herself!—That's all—there are many things that pass among lovers, upon which a man cannot explain himself before grave people.

Lady Betty. Among lovers, sir-r! But, Mr. Lovelace, can you say that this lady behaved either like a weak, or a credulous person?—Can you say—

Lovel. I am ready to do the lady all manner of justice.—But, pray now, ladies, if I am to be thus interrogated, let me know the contents of the rest of the letter, that I may be prepared for my defence, as you are all for my arraignment. For, to be required to answer piecemeal thus, without knowing what is to follow, is a cursed ensnaring way of proceeding.

They gave me the letter: I read it through to myself:—and by the repetition of what I said, thou wilt guess at the remaining contents.

You shall find, ladies, you shall find, my lord, that I will not spare myself. Then holding the letter in my hand, and looking upon it, as a lawyer upon his brief;

Miss Harlowe says, 'that when your ladyship' [turning to Lady Betty] 'shall know, that, in the progress to her ruin, wilful falsehoods, repeated forgeries, and numberless perjuries, were not the least of my crimes, you will judge that she can have no principles that will make her worthy of an alliance with ladies of yours, and your noble sister's character, if she could not, from her soul, declare, that such an alliance can never now take place.'

Surely, ladies, this is passion! This is not reason. If our family would not think themselves dishonoured by my marrying a person whom I had so treated; but, on the contrary, would rejoice that I did her this justice; and if she has come out pure gold from the assay; and has nothing to reproach herself with; why should it be an impeachment of her principles, to consent that such an alliance should take place?

She cannot think herself the worse, *justly* she cannot, for what was done against her will.

Their countenances menaced a general uproar—but I proceeded.

Your lordship read to us, that she had an *hope*, a *presumptuous* one; nay, *a punishably presumptuous* one, she calls it; 'that she might be a means in the hand of Providence, to reclaim me; and that this, she knew, if effected, would give her a merit with you all.' But from what would she reclaim me?—She had *heard*, you'll say, (but she had *only* heard, at the time she entertained *that hope*) that, to express myself in the women's dialect, I was *a very wicked fellow!*—Well, and what then?—Why, truly, the very moment she was *convinced*, by her own experience, that the charge against me was *more* than *hearsay;* and that of consequence, I was a fit subject for *her generous endeavours* to work upon; she would needs give me up. Accordingly, she flies out, and declares, that the ceremony which would repair all, shall never take place!—Can this be from any other motive than *female resentment?*

This brought them all upon me, as I intended it should: it was a tub to a whale; and after I had let them play with it a while, I claimed their attention, and knowing that they always loved to hear me prate, went on.

The lady, it is plain, thought, that the reclaiming a man from bad habits was a much *easier task* than, in the *nature of things*, it *can* be.

She writes, as your lordship has read, 'that, in endeavouring to save a drowning wretch, she had been, not accidently, but premeditatedly, and of set purpose, drawn in after him.' But how is this, ladies?—You see by her own words, that I am still far from being out of danger myself. Had she found me, in a quagmire suppose, and I had got out of it by her means, and left her to perish

in it; that would have been a crime indeed.—But is not the fact quite otherwise? Has she not, if her allegory prove what she would have it prove, got out herself, and left me floundering still deeper and deeper in?—What she should have done, had she been in earnest to save me, was, to join her hand with mine, that so we might by our united strength help one another out.—I held out my hand to her, and besought her to give me hers:—but, no truly! she was determined to get out herself as fast as she could, let me *sink* or *swim*: refusing her assistance (against her own principles) because she saw I wanted it.—You see, ladies, you see, my lord, how pretty tinkling words run away with ears inclined to be musical.

They were all ready to exclaim again: but I went on, *proleptically*, as a rhetorician would say, before their voices could break out into words.

But my fair accuser says, that, 'I have added to the list of those I have ruined, a name, that would not have disparaged my own.' It is true, I have been gay and enterprising. It is in my constitution to be so. I know not how I came by such a constitution: but I was never accustomed to check or control; that you all know. When a man finds himself hurried by passion into a slight offence, which, however slight, will not be forgiven, he may be made desperate: as a thief, who only intends a robbery, is often by resistance, and for self-preservation, drawn in to commit murder.

I was a strange, a horrid wretch with every one. But he must be a silly fellow who has not something to say for himself, when every cause has its black and its white side.—Westminster Hall, Jack, affords every day as confident defences as mine.

But what right, proceeded I, has this lady to complain of me, when she as good as says—Here, Lovelace, you have acted the part of a villain by me.—You would *repair your fault*: but I won't let you, that I may have the satisfaction of exposing you; and the pride of refusing you.

But, was that the case? Was that the case? Would I pretend to say, I would *now* marry the lady, if she would have me?

Lovel. You find she renounces Lady Betty's mediation—

Lord M. [interrupting me] *Words are wind; but deeds are mind.* What signifies your cursed quibbling, Bob?—Say plainly, if she will have you, will you have her? Answer me, yes or no; and lead us not *a wild-goose chase* after your meaning.

Lovel. She knows I would. But here, my lord, if she thus goes on to expose herself and me, she will make it a dishonour to us both to marry.

Charl. But how must she have been treated—

Lovel. [interrupting her] Why now, cousin Charlotte, chucking her under the chin, would you have me tell you all that has passed between the lady and me? Would *you* care, had you a bold and enterprising lover, that proclamation should be made of every little piece of amorous roguery, that he offered to you?

Charlotte reddened. They all began to exclaim. But I proceeded:

The lady says, 'she has been dishonoured' (devil take me, if I spare myself!) 'by means that would shock humanity to be made acquainted with them.' She is a very innocent lady, and may not be a *judge* of the means she hints at. *Over-niceness may be under-niceness*: have you not such a proverb, my lord?—tantamount to, *one extreme produces another!*—Such a lady as this, may pos-

sibly think her case more extraordinary than it is. This I will take upon me to say, that if she has met with the only man in the world who would have treated her, as she says I have treated her, I have met in her with the *only woman in the world* who would have made such a rout about a case that is uncommon only from the circumstances that attend it.

This brought them all upon me; hands, eyes, voices, all lifted up at once. But my Lord M. who has in his *head* (the last seat of retreating lewdness) as much wickedness as I have in my *heart*, was forced (upon the air I spoke this with, and Charlotte's and all the rest reddening) to make a mouth that was big enough to swallow up the other half of his face; crying out, to avoid laughing, Oh! Oh!—as if under the power of a gouty twinge.

Hadst thou seen how the two tabbies and the young grimalkins looked at one another, at my lord, and at me, by turns, thou wouldst have been ready to split thy ugly face just in the middle. Thy mouth has already done half the work. And, after all, I found not seldom in this conversation, that my humorous undaunted manner forced a smile into my service from the prim mouths of the young ladies. They perhaps, had they met with such another intrepid fellow as myself, who had first *gained* upon their affections, would not have made such a rout as my beloved has done, about such an affair as that we were assembled upon. Young ladies, as I have observed on an hundred occasions, fear not half so much for *themselves*, as their mothers do for them. But here the girls were forced to put on grave airs, and to seem angry, because the antiques made the matter of such high importance. Yet so lightly sat anger and fellow-

feeling at their hearts, that they were forced to purse in their mouths, to suppress the smiles I now and then laid out for: while the elders having had roses, (that is to say, daughters of their own) and knowing how fond men are of a trifle, would have been very loth to have had them nipt in the bud, without saying to the mother of them, By your leave, Mrs. Rose-bush.

The next article of my indictment was for forgery; and for personating of Lady Betty and my cousin Charlotte. Two shocking charges, thou'lt say: and so they were!—The peer was outrageous upon the *forgery* charge. The ladies vowed never to forgive the *personating* part. Not a peace-maker among them. So we all turned women, and scolded.

My lord told me, that he believed in his conscience there was not a viler fellow upon *God's earth* than me.—What signifies mincing the matter? said he—and that it was not the first time I had forged his hand.

To this I answered, that I supposed, when the statute of *Scandalum Magnatum* was framed, there were a good many in the peerage, who knew they deserved hard names; and that that law therefore was rather made to privilege their qualities, than to whiten their characters.

He called upon me to explain myself with a *sir-r*, so pronounced, as to show, that one of the most ignominious words in our language was in his head.

People, I said, that were fenced in by their quality, and by their years, should not take freedoms that a man of spirit could not put up with, unless he were able heartily to despise the insulter.

This set him in a violent passion. He would send for Pritchard instantly. Let Pritchard be called.

He would alter his will; and all he *could* leave from me, he *would*.

Do, do, my lord, said I: I always valued my own pleasure above your estate. But I'll let Pritchard know, that if he draws, he shall sign and seal.

Why, what would I do to Pritchard?—Shaking his crazy head at me.

Only, what he, or any man else, writes with his pen, to despoil me of what I think my right, he shall seal with his ears; that's all, my lord.

Then the two ladies interposed.

Lady Sarah told me, that I carried things a great way; and that neither Lord M. nor any of them, deserved the treatment I gave them.

I said, I could not bear to be used ill by my lord, for two reasons; first, because I respected his lordship above any man living; and next, because it looked as if I were induced by selfish considerations to take that from him, which nobody else would offer to me.

And what, returned he, shall be my inducement to take what I do at your hands?—Hay, sir?

Indeed, cousin Lovelace, said Lady Betty, with great gravity, we do not any of us, as Lady Sarah says, deserve at your hands the treatment you give us; and let me tell you, that I don't think my character and your cousin Charlotte's, ought to be prostituted, in order to ruin an innocent lady. She must have known early the good opinion we all have of her, and how much we wished her to be your wife. This good opinion of ours has been an inducement to her (you see she says so) to listen to your address. And this, with her friends' folly, has helped to throw her into your power. How you have requited her, is too apparent. It becomes the character we all bear, to disclaim your actions by her. And let me tell you, that to have

her abused by wicked people raised up to personate us, or any of us, makes a double call upon us to disclaim them.

Lovel. Why this is talking somewhat like. I would have you all disclaim my actions. I own I have done very vilely by this lady. One step led to another, I am curst with an enterprising spirit. I hate to be foiled.

Foiled! interrupted Lady Sarah. What a shame to talk at this rate!—Did the lady set up a contention with you? All nobly sincere, and plain-hearted, have I heard Miss Clarissa Harlowe is: above art, above disguise; neither the coquette, nor the prude!—Poor lady! she deserved a better fate from the man for whom she took the step which she so freely blames!

This above half affected me—had this dispute been so handled by every one, I had been ashamed to look up. I began to be bashful.

Charlotte asked, if I did not seem inclinable to do the lady justice, if she would accept of *me?* It would be, she dared to say, the greatest felicity the family could know (she would answer for one) that this fine lady were of it.

They all declared to the same effect; and lady Sarah put the matter home to me.

But my Lord *Marplot* would have it, that I could not be serious for six minutes together.

I told his lordship, that he was mistaken; light as he thought I made of this subject, I never knew any that went so near my heart.

Miss Patty said, she was glad to hear *that:* indeed she was glad to hear *that:* and her soft eyes glistened with pleasure.

Lord M. called her sweet soul, and was ready to cry.

Not from humanity, neither, Jack. This peer

has no bowels; as thou mayest observe by this treatment of *me*. But when people's minds are weakened by a sense of their own infirmities, and when they are drawing on to their latter ends, they will be moved on the slightest occasions, whether those offer from *within* or *without* them. And this, frequently, the unpenetrating world calls *humanity*; when all the time, in compassionating the miseries of human nature, they are but pitying themselves; and were they in strong health and spirits, would care as little for any body else as thou or I do.

Here broke they off my trial for this sitting. Lady Sarah was much fatigued. It was agreed to pursue the subject in the morning. They all, however, retired together, and went into private conference.

LETTER LVI.

MR. LOVELACE. IN CONTINUATION.

THE ladies, instead of taking up the subject where we had laid it down, must needs touch upon passages in my fair accuser's letter, which I was in hopes they would have let rest, as we were in a tolerable way. But, truly, they must hear all they could hear, of our story, and what I had to say to those passages, that they might be better enabled to mediate between us, if I were really and indeed inclined to do her the hoped-for justice.

These passages were, 1st, 'That after I had compulsatorily tricked her into the act of going off with me, I carried her to one of the worst houses in London.'

2dly, 'That I had made a wicked attempt upon her; in resentment of which, she fled to Hampstead, privately.'

3dly, Came the forgery, and personating charges again; and we were upon the point of renewing our quarrel, before we could get to the next charge: which was still worse.

For that (4thly) was, 'That having betrayed her back to the vile house, I first robbed her of her senses, and then of her honour; detaining her afterwards a prisoner there.'

Were I to tell thee the glosses I put upon these heavy charges, what would it be, but to repeat many of the extenuating arguments I have used in my letters to thee?—Suffice it, therefore, to say, that I insisted much, by way of palliation, on the lady's extreme niceness: on her diffidence in my honour: on Miss Howe's contriving spirit; plots on their parts begetting plots on mine: on the high passions of the sex. I asserted, that my whole view, in gently restraining her, was to oblige her to forgive me, and to marry me; and this, for the honour of both families. I boasted of my own good qualities; some of which none that know me, deny; and to which few libertines can lay claim.

They then fell into warm admirations and praises of the lady: all of them preparatory, as I knew, to the grand question: and thus it was introduced by Lady Sarah.

We have said as much as I think we can say, upon these letters of the poor lady. To dwell upon the mischiefs that may ensue from the abuse of a person of her rank, if all the reparation be not made that now can be made, would perhaps be to little purpose. But you seem, sir, still to have a just opinion of her, as well as affection for her. Her

virtue is not in the least questionable. She could not resent as she does, had she any thing to reproach herself with. She is, by every body's account, a fine woman; has a good estate in her own right; is of no contemptible family; though I think, with regard to her, they have acted as imprudently as unworthily. For the excellency of her mind, for good economy, the common speech of her, as the worthy Dr. Lewen once told me, is, *that her prudence would enrich a poor man, and her piety reclaim a licentious one.* I, who have not been abroad twice this twelvemonth, came hither purposely, so did Lady Betty, to see if justice may not be done her; and also whether we, and my Lord M. (your nearest relations, sir) have, or have not, any influence over you. And, for my own part, as your determination shall be in this article, such shall be mine, with regard to the disposition of all that is within my power.

Lady Betty. And mine.

And mine, said my lord: and valiantly he swore to it.

Lovel. Far be it from me to think slightly of favours you may any of you be glad I would deserve! But as far be it from me to enter into conditions against my own liking, with sordid views!—As to future mischiefs, let them come. I have not done with the Harlowes yet. They were the aggressors; and I should be glad they would let me hear from them, in the way they should hear from me, in the like case. Perhaps I should not be sorry to be *found,* rather than be obliged to *seek,* on this occasion.

Miss Charlotte [reddening]. Spoke like a man of violence, rather than a man of reason! I hope you'll allow that, cousin.

Lady Sarah. Well, but since what is done *is* done,

and cannot be undone, let us think of the next best. Have you any objection against marrying Miss Harlowe, if she will have you?

Lovel. There can possibly be but one: that she is to every body, no doubt, as well as to Lady Betty, pursuing that maxim peculiar to herself *(and let me tell you, so it ought to be)*: that what she cannot conceal from herself, she will publish to all the world.

Miss Patty. The lady, to be sure, writes this in the bitterness of her grief, and in despair.—

Lovel. And so when her grief is allayed; when her despairing fit is over—and this from *you*, cousin Patty!—*Sweet girl!* and would *you*, my dear, in the like case [whispering her] have yielded to entreaty—would you have meant no more by the like exclamations?

I had a rap with her fan, and a blush; and from Lord M. a reflection, that I turned into jest every thing they said.

I asked, if they thought the Harlowes deserved any consideration from me! and whether that family would not exult over me, were I to marry their daughter, as if I *dared* not to do otherwise?

Lady Sarah. Once I was angry with that family, as we all were. But now I pity them; and think, that you have but too well justified the worst treatment they gave you.

Lord M. Their family is of standing. All gentlemen of it, and rich, and reputable. Let me tell you, that many of our coronets would be glad they could derive their descents from no worse a stem than theirs.

Lovel. The Harlowes are a narrow-souled and implacable family. I hate them; and though I revere the lady, scorn all relation to them.

Lady Betty. I wish no worse could be said of

him, who is such a scorner of common failings in *others*.

Lord M. How would my sister Lovelace have reproached herself for all her indulgent folly to this favourite boy of hers, had she lived till now, and been present on this occasion!

Lady Sarah. Well, but begging your lordship's pardon, let us see if any thing can be done for this poor lady.

Miss Ch. If Mr. Lovelace has nothing to object against the lady's character, (and I presume to think he is not *ashamed* to do her justice, though it may make against himself) I cannot see but honour and generosity will compel from him all that we expect. If there were any levities, any weaknesses, to be charged upon the lady, I should not open my lips in her favour; though in private I would pity her, and deplore her hard hap. And yet, even then, there might not want arguments, from honour and gratitude, in so particular a case, to engage you, sir, to make good the vows it is plain you have broken.

Lady Betty. My niece Charlotte has called upon you so justly, and has put the question to you so properly, that I cannot but wish you would speak to it directly, and without evasion.

All in a breath then bespoke my seriousness, and my justice: and in this manner I delivered myself, assuming an air sincerely solemn.

'I am very sensible, that the performance of the task you have put me upon, will leave me without excuse: but I will not have recourse either to evasion or palliation.

'As my cousin Charlotte has severely observed, I am not *ashamed* to do justice to Miss Harlowe's merit.

'I own to you all, and, what is more, with high

regret (if not with *shame*, cousin Charlotte) that I have a great deal to answer for in my usage of this lady. The sex has not a nobler mind, nor a lovelier person of it. And, for *virtue*, I could not have believed, (excuse me ladies) that there ever was a woman who *gave*, or *could* have given, such illustrious, such uniform proofs of it: for, in her whole conduct, she has shown herself to be equally above temptation and art; and, I had almost said, human frailty.

'The step she so freely blames herself for taking, was truly what she calls *compulsatory*: for though she was provoked to *think* of going off with me, she intended it not, nor was provided to do so: neither would she ever have had the *thought* of it, had her relations left her free, upon her offered composition to renounce the man she did *not* hate, in order to avoid the man she *did*.

'It piqued my pride, I own, that I could so little depend upon the force of those impressions which I had the vanity to hope I had made in a heart so delicate; and in my worst devices against her, I encouraged myself, that I abused no confidence; for none had she in my honour.

'The evils she has suffered, it would have been more than a miracle had she avoided. Her watchfulness rendered more plots abortive, than those which contributed to her fall; and they were many and various. And all her greater trials and hardships were owing to her noble resistance, and just resentment.

'I know, proceeded I, how much I condemn myself in the justice I am doing to this excellent creature. But yet I *will* do her justice, and cannot help it if I would. And I hope this shows, that I am not so totally abandoned, as I have been thought to be.

'Indeed, with me, she has done more honour to her sex in her fall, if it be to be called a fall (in truth it ought not) than ever any other could do in her standing.

'When, at length, I had given her watchful virtue cause of suspicion, I was then indeed obliged to make use of power and art to prevent her escaping from me. She then formed contrivances to elude mine; but all *hers* were such as strict truth and punctilious honour would justify. She could not stoop to deceit and falsehood, no, not to save herself. More than once justly did she tell me, fired by conscious worthiness, that her soul was my soul's superior!—Forgive me, ladies, for saying, that till I knew *her*, I questioned a soul in a sex, created, as I was willing to suppose, only for temporary purposes.—It is not to be imagined into what absurdities men of free principles run in order to justify to themselves their free practices; and to make a religion to their minds: and yet, in this respect, I have not been so faulty as some others.

'No wonder that such a noble creature as this looked upon every studied artifice, as a degree of baseness not to be forgiven: no wonder that she could so easily become averse to the man (though once she beheld him with an eye not wholly indifferent) whom she thought capable of premeditated guilt—Nor, give me leave on the other hand, to say, is it to be wondered at, that the man who found it so difficult to be forgiven for the *slighter* offences, and who had not the grace to recede or repent (made desperate) should be hurried on to the commission of the *greater*.

'In short, ladies, in a word, my lord, Miss Clarissa Harlowe is an angel; if ever there was or could be one in human nature: and is, and ever

was, as pure as an angel in her will: and this justice I must do her, although the question, I see by every glistening eye, is ready to be asked, What, then, Lovelace, art thou?—"

Lord M. A devil!—A d—ned devil! I must answer. And may the curse of God follow you in all you undertake, if you do not make her the best amends now in your power to make her!

Lovel. From you, my lord, I could expect no other: but from the ladies I hope for less violence from the ingenuousness of my confession.

The ladies, elder and younger, had their handkerchiefs to their eyes, at the just testimony which I bore to the merits of this exalted creature; and which I would make no scruple to bear at the bar of a court of justice, were I to be called to it.

Lady Betty. Well, sir, this is a noble character. If you think as you speak, surely you cannot refuse to do the lady all the justice now in your power to do her.

They all joined in this demand.

I pleaded, that I was sure she would not have me: that, when she had taken a resolution, she was not to be moved: unpersuadeableness was an Harlowe sin: that, and her name, I told them, were all she had of theirs.

All were of opinion, that she might, in her present desolate circumstances, be brought to forgive me. Lady Sarah said, that Lady Betty and she would endeavour to find out the *noble sufferer*, as they justly called her; and would take her into their protection, and be guarantees of the justice that I would do her; as well after marriage as before.

It was some pleasure to me, to observe the placability of these ladies of my own family, had they, any or either of them, met with a LOVELACE. But

'twould be hard upon us honest fellows, Jack, if all women were CLARISSAS.

Here I am obliged to break off.

LETTER LVII.

MR. LOVELACE. IN CONTINUATION.

IT is much better, Jack, to tell your own story, when it *must* be known, than to have an adversary tell it for you. Conscious of this, I gave them a particular account how urgent I had been with her to fix upon the Thursday after I left her (it being her uncle Harlowe's anniversary birth-day, and named to oblige her) for the private celebration; having some days before actually procured a licence, which still remained with her.

That, not being able to prevail upon her to promise any thing, while under a supposed restraint; I offered to leave her at full liberty, if she would give me the least hope for that day. But neither did this offer avail me.

That this inflexibleness making me desperate; I resolved to add to my former fault, by giving directions, that she should not either go or correspond out of the house, till I returned from M. Hall; well knowing, that if she were at full liberty, I must for ever lose her.

That this constraint had so much incensed her, that although I wrote no less than four different letters, I could not procure a single word in answer; though I pressed her but for four words to signify the day and the church.

I referred to my two cousins to vouch for me the extraordinary methods I took to send messengers

to town, though they knew not the occasion: which now I told them was *this*.

I acquainted them, that I even had wrote to you, Jack, and to another gentlemah of whom I thought she had a good opinion, to attend her, in order to press for her compliance; holding myself in readiness the last day, at Salt Hill, to meet the messenger they should send, and proceed to London, if his message were favourable: but that, before they could attend her, she had found means to fly away once more: and is now, said I, perched perhaps somewhere under Lady Betty's window at Glenham Hall; and there, like the sweet Philomela, a thorn in her breast, warbles forth her melancholy complaint against her barbarous Tereus.

Lady Betty declared, that she was not with *her*; nor did she know where she was. She should be, she added, the most welcome guest to her, that she ever received.

In truth I had a suspicion, that she was already in their knowledge, and taken into their protection; for Lady Sarah I imagined incapable of being rouzed to this spirit by a letter only from Miss Harlowe, and that not directed to herself; she being a very indolent and melancholy woman. But her sister, I find, had wrought her up to it: for Lady Betty is as officious and managing a woman as Mrs. Howe; but of a much more generous and noble disposition—she is *my aunt*, Jack.

I supposed, I said, that her ladyship might have a private direction where to send to her. I spoke as I wished: I would have given the world to have heard that she was inclined to cultivate the interest of any of my family.

Lady Betty answered, that she had no direction but what was in the letter; which she had scratched out, and which, it was probable, was only a tem-

porary one, in order to avoid me: otherwise she would hardly have directed an answer to be left at an inn. And she was of opinion, that to apply to Miss Howe would be the only certain way to succeed in any application for forgiveness, would I enable that young lady to interest herself in procuring it.

Miss Charlotte. Permit me to make a proposal.—Since we are all of one mind in relation to the justice due to Miss Harlowe, if Mr. Lovelace will oblige himself to marry her, I will make Miss Howe a visit, little as I am acquainted with her; and endeavour to engage her interest to forward the desired reconciliation. And if this can be done, I make no question but all may be happily accommodated; for every body knows the love there is between Miss Harlowe and Miss Howe.

MARRIAGE, *with these women, thou seest, Jack, is an atonement for all we can do to them. A true dramatic recompence!*

This motion was highly approved of; and I gave my honour, as desired, in the fullest manner they could wish.

Lady Sarah. Well then, cousin Charlotte, begin your treaty with Miss Howe, directly.

Lady Betty. Pray do. And let Miss Harlowe be told, that I am ready to receive her as the most welcome of guests: and I will not have her out of my sight till the knot is tied.

Lady Sarah. Tell her from me, that she shall be my daughter!—Instead of my poor Betsey;——and shed a tear in remembrance of her lost daughter.

Lord M. What say you, sir, to this?

Lovel. CONTENT, my lord, I speak in the language of your house.

Lord M. We are not to be fooled, nephew. No quibbling. We will have no slur put upon us.

Lovel. You shall not. And yet, I did not intend to marry, if she exceeded the appointed Thursday. But, I think (according to her own notions) that I have injured her beyond reparation, although I were to make her the best of husbands; as I am resolved to be, if she will *condescend,* as I will call it, to have me. And be this cousin Charlotte, *my* part of your commission to say.

This pleased them all.

Lord M. Give me thy hand, Bob!—Thou talkest like a man of honour at last. I hope we may depend upon what thou sayest!

The ladies eyes put the same question to me.

Lovel. You may, my lord. You may, ladies—absolutely you may.

Then was the personal character of the lady, as well as her more extraordinary talents and endowments again expatiated upon: and Miss Patty, who had once seen her, launched out more than all the rest in her praise. These were followed by such enquiries as are never forgotten to be made in marriage treaties, and which generally are the *principal motives* with the *sages* of a family, though the *least to be mentioned* by the *parties* themselves, and yet even by *them,* perhaps, the *first* thought of: that is to say, inquisition into the lady's fortune; into the particulars of the grandfather's estate; and what her father, and her single-souled uncles, will probably do for her, if a reconciliation be effected; as, by their means, they make no doubt but it will, between both families, if it be not my fault. The two venerables [no longer tabbies with me now] hinted at rich presents on their own parts; and my lord declared, that he would make such over-

tures in my behalf, as should render my marriage with Miss Harlowe the best day's work I ever made; and what, he doubted not, would be as agreeable to that family, as to myself.

Thus, at present, by a single hair, hangs over my head the matrimonial sword. And thus ended my trial. And thus are we all friends, and cousin and cousin, and nephew and nephew, at every word.

Did ever comedy end more happily, than this long trial?

LETTER LVIII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Wedn. July 12.

So, Jack, they think they have gained a mighty point. But, *were* I to change my mind, *were* I to repent, I fancy I am safe.—And yet this very moment it rises to my mind, that 'tis hard trusting too; for surely there must be some embers, where there was fire so lately, that may be stirred up to give a blaze to combustibles strewed lightly upon them. Love (like some self-propagating plants, or roots, which have taken strong hold in the earth) when once got deep into the heart, is hardly ever *totally* extirpated, except by matrimony indeed, which is the grave of love, because it allows of the end of love. Then these ladies, all advocates *for* herself, *with* herself, Miss Howe at their head perhaps—not in favour to me—I don't expect that from Miss Howe—but perhaps in favour to *herself*: for Miss Howe has reason to apprehend vengeance from me, I ween. Her Hickman will be safe too, as she may think, if I marry her beloved friend: for

he has been a busy fellow, and I have long wished to have a slap at him!—The lady's case desperate with her friends too; and likely to be so, while single, and her character exposed to censure.

A husband is a charming cloak, a fig-leafed apron for a wife: and for a lady to be protected in liberties, in diversions, which her heart pants after—and all her faults, even the most criminal, were she to be detected, to be thrown upon the husband, and the ridicule too; a charming privilege for a wife!

But I shall have one comfort if I marry, which pleases me not a little. If a man's wife has a dear friend of her sex, a hundred liberties may be taken with that friend, which could *not* be taken, if the *single lady* (knowing what a title to freedoms marriage has given him with her *friend*) was not less scrupulous with him than she ought to be, as to *herself*. Then there are *broad* freedoms (shall I call them?) that may be taken by the husband with his wife, that may not be *quite* shocking, which, if the wife *bears before her friend*, will serve for a lesson to that *friend*; and if that friend *bears* to be present at them without check or bashfulness, will show a sagacious fellow that she can bear as much herself, at *proper time* and *place*.

Chastity, Jack, like *piety*, is an uniform thing. If in *look*, if in *speech*, a girl give way to undue levity, depend upon it the devil has got one of his cloven feet in her heart already—so, Hickman, take care of thyself, I advise thee, whether I marry or not.

Thus, Jack, have I at once reconciled myself to all my relations—and if the lady refuses me, thrown the fault upon her. This, I know, would be in my power to do at any time: and I was the more arrogant to them, in order to heighten the merit of my compliance.

But after all, it would be very whimsical, would it not, if all my plots and contrivances should end in wedlock? What a punishment would this come out to be, upon myself too, that all this while I have been plundering my own treasury?

And then, can there be so much harm done, if it can be so easily repaired by a few magical words; as *I, Robert,* take thee, Clarissa; and I, Clarissa, take thee, Robert, with the rest of the, for-better and for-worse legerdemain, which will hocus pocus all the wrongs, the crying wrongs, that I have done to Miss Harlowe, into acts of kindness and benevolence to Mrs. Lovelace?

But, Jack, two things I must insist upon with thee, if this is to be the case.—Having put secrets of so high a nature between me and my spouse into thy power, I must, for my own honour, and for the honour of my wife and my illustrious progeny, first oblige thee to give up the letters I have so profusely scribbled to thee: and, in the next place, do by thee, as I have heard whispered in France was done by the *true* father of a certain monarque; that is to say, cut thy throat, to prevent thy telling of tales.

I have found means to heighten the kind opinion my friends here have begun to have of me, by communicating to them the contents of the four last letters which I wrote to press my elected spouse to solemnize. My lord has repeated one of his phrases in my favour, that he hopes it will come out, *that the devil is not quite so black as he is painted.*

Now, pr'ythee, dear Jack, since so many good consequences are to flow from these our nuptials (one of which to *thyself;* since the sooner thou diest, the less thou wilt have to answer for); and that I now and then am apt to believe there may be something in the old fellow's notion, who once

told us, that he who kills a man, has all that man's sins to answer for, as well as his own, because he gave him not the time to repent of them, that heaven designed to allow him [a fine thing for thee, if thou consentest to be knocked of the head; but a cursed one for the manslayer!] and since there may be room to fear, that Miss Howe will not give us her help; I pry'thee now exert thyself to find out my Clarissa Harlowe, that I may make a LOVELACE of her. Set all the city bellmen, and the country criers, for ten miles round the metropolis, at work, with their 'Oyes's! and if any man, woman, or child, can give tale or tidings'—advertise her in all the newspapers; and let her know, 'that if she will repair to Lady Betty Lawrance, or to Miss Charlotte Montague, she may hear of something greatly to her advantage.'

* * *

MY two cousins Montague are actually to set out to-morrow, to Mrs. Howe's to engage her vixen daughter's interest with her friend. They will flaunt it away in a chariot and six, for the greater state and significance.

Confounded mortification to be reduced thus low! —My pride hardly knows how to brook it.

Lord M. has engaged the two venerables to stay here, to attend the issue: and I, standing very high at present in their good graces, am to gallant them to Oxford, to Blenheim, and several other places.

LETTER LIX.

MISS HOWE TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Thursday night, July 13.

COLLINS sets not out to-morrow. Some domestic occasion hinders him. Rogers is but now returned from you, and cannot well be spared. Mr. Hickman is gone upon an affair of my mother's, and has taken both his servants with him, to do credit to his employer: so I am forced to venture this by the post, directed by your assumed name.

I am to acquaint you, that I have been favoured with a visit from Miss Montague and her sister, in Lord M.'s chariot-and-six. My lord's gentleman rode here yesterday, with a request that I would receive a visit from the two young ladies, on a *very particular occasion*; the greater favour if it might be the next day.

As I had so little personal knowledge of either, I doubted not but it must be in relation to the interests of my dear friend; and so consulting with my mother, I sent them an invitation to favour me (because of the distance) with their company at dinner; which they kindly accepted.

I hope, my dear, since things have been so very bad, that their errand to me will be as agreeable to you, as any thing that can now happen. They came in the name of Lord M. and Lady Sarah and Lady Betty his two sisters, to desire my interest to engage you to put yourself into the protection of Lady Betty; who will not part with you till she sees all the justice done you that now can be done.

Lady Sarah had not stirred out for a twelvemonth before; never since she lost her agreeable

daughter whom you and I saw at Mrs. Benson's: but was induced to take this journey by Lady Betty, purely to procure you reparation, if possible. And their joint strength, united with Lord M.'s has so far succeeded, that the wretch has bound himself to them, and to these young ladies, in the solemnest manner, to wed you in their presence, if they can prevail upon you to give him your hand.

This consolation you may take to yourself, that all this honourable family have a *due* (that is the *highest*) sense of your merit, and greatly admire you. The horrid creature has not spared himself in doing justice to your virtue; and the young ladies gave us such an account of his confessions, and self-condemnation, that my mother was quite charmed with you; and we all four shed tears of joy, that there is one of our sex [I, that that one is my dearest friend] who has done so much honour to it, as to deserve the exalted praises given you by a wretch so self-conceited; though pity for the excellent creature mingled with our joy.

He promises by them to make the best of husbands; and my lord, and Lady Betty, and Lady Sarah, are all three to be guarantees that he will be so. Noble settlements, noble presents, they talked of: they say, they left Lord M. and his two sisters talking of nothing else but of those presents and settlements, how most to do you honour, the greater in proportion for the indignities you have suffered; and of changing of names by Act of Parliament, preparative to the interest they will all join to make to get the titles to go where the bulk of the estate must go, at my lord's death, which they apprehend to be nearer than they wish. Nor doubt they of a thorough reformation in his morals, from your example and influence over him.

I made a great many objections for you—all, I

believe, that you could have made yourself, had you been present. But I have no doubt to advise you, my dear, (and so does my mother) instantly to put yourself into Lady Betty's protection, with a resolution to take the wretch for your husband. All his future grandeur [he wants not pride] depends upon his sincerity to you; and the young ladies vouch for the depth of his concern for the wrongs he has done you.

All his apprehension is, in your readiness to communicate to every one, as he fears, the evils you have suffered; which he thinks will expose you both. But had you not revealed them to Lady Betty, you had not had so warm a friend; since it is owing to two letters you wrote to her, that all this good, as I hope it will prove, was brought about. But I advise you to be more sparing in exposing what is past, whether you have thoughts of accepting him or not: for what my dear, can that avail now, but to give a handle to vile wretches to triumph over your friends; since every one will not know how much to your honour your very sufferings have been?

Your melancholy letter brought by Rogers*, with his account of your indifferent health, confirmed to him by the woman of the house, as well as by your looks, and by your faintness while you talked with him, would have given me inexpressible affliction, had I not been cheered by this agreeable visit from the young ladies. I hope you will be equally so on my imparting the subject of it to you.

Indeed, my dear, you must not hesitate. You *must* oblige them. The alliance is splendid and honourable. Very few will know any thing of his

* See p. 208, & seq.

brutal baseness to you. All must end, in a little while, in a general reconciliation; and you will be able to resume your course of doing the good to every deserving object, which procured you blessings wherever you set your foot.

I am concerned to find, that your father's inhuman curse affects you so much as it does. Yet you are a noble creature to put it, as you put it—I hope you are indeed more solicitous to get it revoked for their sakes than for your own. It is for *them* to be penitent, who hurried you into evils you could not well avoid. You are apt to judge by the unhappy event, rather than upon the true merits of your case. Upon my honour, I think you faultless almost in every step you have taken. What has not that vilely insolent and ambitious, yet stupid, brother of yours to answer for?—That spiteful thing your sister too!

But come, since what is past cannot be helped, let us look forward. You have now happy prospects opening to you: a family, *already noble*, prepared to receive and embrace you with open arms, and joyful hearts, and who, by their love to you, will teach another family (who know not what an excellence they have confederated to persecute) how to value you. Your prudence, your piety, will crown all. You will reclaim a wretch, that for an hundred sakes more than for his own, one would wish to be reclaimed.

Like a traveller, who has been put out of his way, by the overflowing of some rapid stream, you have only had the fore-right path you were in overwhelmed. A few miles about, a day or two only lost, as I may say, and you are in a way to recover it; and, by quickening your speed, will get up the lost time. The hurry upon your spirits, meantime, will be all your inconvenience; for it

was not your fault you were stopped in your progress.

Think of this, my dear, and improve upon the allegory, as you know how. If you can, without impeding your progress, be the means of assuaging the inundation, of bounding the waters within their natural channel, and thereby of recovering the overwhelmed path for the sake of future passengers who travel the same way, what a merit will yours be!

I shall impatiently expect your next letter. The young ladies proposed, that you should put yourself, if in town, or near it, into the Reading stage coach, which inns somewhere in Fleet Street: and if you give notice of the day, you will be met on the road, and that pretty early in your journey, by some of both sexes; one of whom you won't be sorry to see.

Mr. Hickman shall attend you at Slough; and Lady Betty herself, and one of the Miss Montagues, with proper equipages, will be at Reading to receive you; and carry you directly to the seat of the former: for I have expressly stipulated, that the wretch himself shall not come into your presence till your nuptials are to be solemnized, unless you give leave.

Adieu, my dearest friend. Be happy: and hundreds will then be happy of consequence. Inexpressibly so, I am sure, will then be

Your ever affectionate

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER LX.

MISS HOWE TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

MY DEAREST FRIEND, Sunday night, July 16.

WHY would you permit a mind so much devoted to your service, to labour under such an impatience as you must know it *would* labour under, for want of an answer to a letter of such consequence to *you*, and therefore to *me*, as was mine of Thursday night?—Rogers told me on Thursday, you were *so* ill; your letter sent by him was *so* melancholy!—Yet you must be ill indeed, if you could not write something to such a letter; were it but a line, to say you would write as soon as you could. Sure you have received it. The master of our nearest post-office will pawn his reputation that it went safe: I gave him particular charge of it.

God send me good news of your health, of your ability to write; and then I will chide you—indeed I will—as I never yet did chide you.

I suppose your excuse will be, that the subject required consideration—Lord! my dear, so it might; but you have so right a mind, and the matter in question is so obvious, that you could not want half an hour to determine—then you intended, probably, to wait Collins's call for your letter as on to-morrow!—Suppose—miss!—indeed I am angry with you!—suppose) something were to happen, as it did on Friday, that he should not be able to go to town to-morrow?—How, child, could you serve me so!—I know not how to leave off scolding you!

Dear, honest Collins, make haste: he will: he will. He sets out, and travels all night: for I have told him, that the dearest friend I have in the world has it in her own choice to be happy, and to make

me so; and that the letter he will bring from her will assure it to me.

I have ordered him to go directly (without stopping at the Saracen's Head inn) to you at your lodgings. Matters are now in so good a way, that he safely may.

Your expected letter is ready written I hope: if it be not, he will call for it at your hour.

You can't be so happy as you deserve to be: but I doubt not that you will be as happy as you *can*; that is, that you will choose to put yourself instantly into Lady Betty's protection. If you would not have the wretch for *your own* sake; have him you must, for *mine*, for your *family's*, for your *honour's* sake!—Dear honest Collins, make haste! make haste! and relieve the impatient heart of my beloved's

Ever faithful, ever affectionate,

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER LXI.

MISS HOWE TO MISS CHARLOTTE MONTAGUE.

MADAM, Tuesday morn. July 18.

I TAKE the liberty to write to you, by this special messenger. In the frensy of my soul I write to you, to demand of you, and of any of your family who can tell, news of my beloved friend; who, I doubt, has been spirited away by the base arts of one of the blackest—O help me to a name bad enough to call him by! Her piety is proof against self attempts. It must, it must be he, the only wretch, who could injure such an innocent; and now who knows what he has done with her!

If I have patience, I will give you the occasion of this distracted vehemence.

I wrote to her the very moment you and your sister left me. But being unable to procure a special messenger, as I intended, was forced to send by the post. I urged her [you know I promised that I would: I urged her] with earnestness, to comply with the desires of all your family. Having no answer, I wrote again on Sunday night; and sent it by a particular hand, who travelled all night; chiding her for keeping a heart so impatient as mine in such cruel suspense, upon a matter of so much importance to her; and therefore to me. And very angry I was with her in my mind.

But, judge my astonishment, my distraction, when last night, the messenger, returning post-haste, brought me word, that she had not been heard of since Friday morning! And that a letter lay for her at her lodgings, which came by the post; and must be mine!

She went out about six that morning; only intending, as they believe, to go to morning prayers at Covent Garden church, just by her lodgings, as she had done divers times before—went on foot—left word she should be back in an hour—very poorly in health!

Lord, have mercy upon me! What shall I do!—I was a distracted creature all last night!

O madam! you know not how I love her!—My own soul is not dearer to me, than my Clarissa Harlowe!—Nay, she *is* my soul—for I now have none—only a miserable one, however—for she was the joy, the stay, the prop of my life. Never woman loved woman as we love one another. It is impossible to tell you half her excellencies. It

was my glory and my pride, that I was capable of so fervent a love of so pure and matchless a creature—but now—who knows, whether the dear injured has not all her woes, her undeserved woes, completed in death; or is not reserved for a worse fate!—This I leave to your inquiry—for—your—[shall I call the man——your?] relation I understand is still with you.

Surely, my good ladies, you were well authorized in the proposals you made in presence of my mother! Surely he dare not abuse your confidence, and the confidence of your noble relations! I make no apology for giving you this trouble, nor for desiring you to favour with a line, by this messenger,

Your almost distracted

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER LXII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

M. Hall, Sat. night, July 15.

All undone, undone, by Jupiter!—Zounds, Jack, what shall I do now! A curse upon all my plots and contrivances!—But I have it!—In the very heart and soul of me, I have it!

Thou toldest me, that my punishments were but beginning—canst thou, O fatal prognosticator! canst thou tell me where they will end?

Thy assistance I bespeak. The moment thou receivest this, I bespeak thy assistance. This messenger rides for life and death—and I hope he'll find you at your town lodgings; if he meet not with you at Edgware; where, being Sunday, he will call first.

This cursed, cursed woman, on Friday dispatched

man and horse with the joyful news (as she thought it would be to me) in an exulting letter from Sally Martin, that she had found out my angel as on Wednesday last; and on Friday morning, after she had been at prayers at Covent Garden church—praying for my reformation perhaps—got her arrested by two sheriff's officers, as she was returning to her lodgings, who (villains!) put her into a chair they had in readiness, and carried her to one of the cursed fellow's houses.

She has arrested her for 150*l.* pretendedly due for board and lodging: a sum (besides the low villany of the proceeding) which the dear soul could not possibly raise: all her clothes and effects, except what she had on and with her when she went away, being at the old devil's.

And here, for an aggravation, has the dear creature lain already two days; for I must be gallanting my two aunts and my two cousins, and giving Lord M. an airing after his lying-in—pox upon the whole family of us! And returned not till within this hour; and now returned to my distraction, on receiving the cursed tidings, and the exulting letter.

Hasten, hasten, dear Jack; for the love of God, hasten to the injured charmer! My heart bleeds for her—she deserved not this!—I dare not stir. It will be thought done by my contrivance—and if I am absent from this place, that will confirm the suspicion.

D———n seize quick this accursed woman!—Yet she thinks she has made no small merit with me. Unhappy, thrice-unhappy circumstance!—At a time too, when better prospects were opening for the sweet creature!

Hasten to her!—Clear me of this cursed job. Most sincerely, by all that's sacred, I swear you

may!—Yet have I been such a villanous plotter, that the charming sufferer will hardly believe it: although the proceeding be so dirtily low.

Set her free the moment you see her: without conditioning, free!—On your knees, for me, beg her pardon: and assure her, that, wherever she goes, I will not molest her: no, nor come near her without her leave: and be sure allow not any of the damned crew to go near her—only let her permit *you* to receive her commands from time to time.—You have always been her friend and advocate. What would I now give, had I permitted you to have been a successful one!

Let her have all her clothes and effects sent her instantly, as a small proof of my sincerity. And force upon the dear creature, who must be moneyless, what sums you can get her to take. Let me know how she has been treated. If roughly, woe be to the guilty!

Take thy watch in thy hand, after thou hast freed her, and damn the whole brood, dragon and serpents, by the hour, till thou'rt tired; and tell them, I bid thee do so for their cursed officiousness.

They had nothing to do when they had found her, but to wait my orders how to proceed.

The great devil fly away with them all, one by one, through the roof of their own cursed house, and dash them to pieces against the tops of chimnies as he flies; and let the lesser devils collect their scattered scraps, and bag them up, in order to put them together again in their allotted place, in the element of fire, with cements of molten lead.

A line! a line! a kingdom for a line! with tolerable news, the first moment thou canst write!—This fellow waits to bring it.

LETTER LXIII.

MISS CHARLOTTE MONTAGUE TO MISS HOWE.

M. Hall, Tuesday afternoon.

DEAR MISS HOWE,

YOUR letter has infinitely disturbed us all.

This wretched man has been half distracted ever since Saturday night.

We knew not what ailed him, till your letter was brought.

Vile wretch, as he is, he is however innocent of this new evil.

Indeed he is, he *must* be; as I shall more at large acquaint you.

But will not now detain your messenger.

Only to satisfy your just impatience, by telling you, that the dear young lady is safe, and, we hope well.

A horrid mistake of his general orders has subjected her to the terror and disgrace of an arrest.

Poor dear Miss Harlowe!—Her sufferings have endeared her to us, almost as much as her excellencies can have endeared her to you.

But she must be now quite at liberty.

He has been a distracted man, ever since the news was brought him; and we knew not what ailed him.

But that I said before.

My Lord M. my Lady Sarah Sadleir, and my Lady Betty Lawrance, will all write to you this very afternoon.

And so will the wretch himself.

And send it by a servant of their own, not to detain yours.

I know not what I write.

But you shall have all the particulars, just, and true, and fair, from

Dear madam,

Your most faithful and obedient servant,

CH. MONTAGUE.

LETTER LXIV.

MISS MONTAGUE TO MISS HOWE.

DEAR MADAM, M. Hall, July 18.

In pursuance of my promise, I will minutely inform you of every thing we know, relating to this shocking transaction.

When we returned from you on Thursday night, and made our report of the kind reception both we and our message met with, in that you had been so good as to promise to use your interest with your dear friend; it put us all into such good humour with one another, and with my cousin Lovelace, that we resolved upon a little tour of two days, the Friday and Saturday, in order to give an airing to my Lord, and Lady Sarah; both having been long confined, one by illness, the other by melancholy. My Lord, Lady Sarah, Lady Betty, and myself, were in the coach; and all our talk was of dear Miss Harlowe, and of our future happiness with her. Mr. Lovelace and my sister (who is his favourite, as he is hers) were in his phaeton: and whenever we joined company, that was still the subject.

As to him, never man praised woman, as he did her: never man gave greater hopes, and made better resolutions. He is none of those that are governed by interest. He is too proud for that. But

most sincerely delighted was he in talking of her; and of his hopes of her returning favour. He said, however, more than once, that he feared she would not forgive him; for, from his heart he must say, he deserved not her forgiveness: and often and often, that there was not such a woman in the world.

This I mention to show you, madam, that he could not at this time be privy to such a barbarous and disgraceful treatment of her.

We returned not till Saturday night, all in as good humour with one another as we went out. We never had such pleasure in his company before. If he would be good, and as he ought to be, no man would be better beloved by relations than he. But never was there a greater alteration in a man when he came home, and received a letter from a messenger, who, it seems, had been flattering himself in hopes of a reward, and had been waiting for his return from the night before. In *such* a fury!—The man fared but badly. He instantly shut himself up to write, and ordered man and horse to be ready to set out before daylight the next morning, to carry the letter to a friend in London.

He would not see us all that night; neither breakfast nor dine with us next day. He ought, he said, never to see the light; and bid my sister, whom he called an *innocent* (and who was very desirous to know the occasion of all this) shun him; saying, he was a wretch, and made so by his own inventions, and the consequences of them.

None of us could get out of him what so disturbed him. We should too soon hear, he said, to the utter dissipation of all *his* hopes, and of all *ours*.

We could easily suppose, that all was not right with regard to the worthy young lady and him.

He was out each day; and said he wanted to run away from himself.

Late on Monday night he received a letter from Mr. Belford, his most favoured friend, by his own messenger; who came back in a foam, man and horse. Whatever were the contents, he was not easier, but like a madman rather: but still would not let us know the occasion. But to my sister he said, Nobody, my dear Patsey, who can think but of half the plagues that pursue an intriguing spirit, would ever quit the fore-right path.

He was out when your messenger came: but soon came in; and bad enough was his reception from us all. And he said, that his own torments were greater than ours, than Miss Harlowe's, or yours, madam, all put together. He would see your letter. He always carries every thing before him: and said, when he had read it, that he thanked God, he was not such a villain, as you, with too great an appearance of reason, thought him.

Thus then he owned the matter to be.

He had left general directions to the people of the lodgings the dear lady went from, to find out where she was gone to, if possible, that he might have an opportunity to importune her to be his, before their difference was public. The wicked people (*officious* at least, if not wicked) discovered where she was on Wednesday; and, for fear she should remove before they could have his orders, they put her under a *gentle restraint*, as they call it; and dispatched away a messenger to acquaint him with it; and to take his orders.

This messenger arrived on Friday afternoon; and staid here till we returned on Saturday night:—and when he read the letter he brought—I have told you, madam, what a fury he was in.

The letter he retired to write, and which he dispatched away so early on Sunday morning, was to conjure his friend Mr. Belford, on receipt of it, to fly to the lady, and set her free; and to order all her things to be sent her; and to clear him of so *black* and *villanous* a fact, as he justly called it.

And by this time he doubts not that all is happily over; and the beloved of his soul (as he calls her at every word) in an easier and happier way than she was before the horrid fact. And now he owns, that the reason why Mr. Belford's letter set him into stronger ravings, was because of his keeping him wilfully (and on purpose to torment him) in suspense; and reflecting very heavily upon him (for Mr. Belford, he says, was ever the lady's friend and advocate); and only mentioning, that he had waited upon her; referring to his next for further particulars; which Mr. Belford could have told him at the time.

He declares, and we can vouch for him, that he has been, ever since last Saturday night, the most miserable of men.

He forebore going up himself, that it might not be imagined he was guilty of so black a contrivance; and that he went up to complete any base views in consequence of it.

Believe us all, dear Miss Howe, under the deepest concern at this unhappy accident; which will, we fear, exasperate the charming sufferer; not too much for the occasion, but too much for our hopes.

O what wretches are these free-living men, who love to tread in intricate paths; and, when once they err, know not how far out of the way their headstrong course may lead them!

My sister joins her thanks with mine to your good mother and self, for the favours you heaped upon us last Thursday. We beseech your conti-

nued interest as to the subject of our visit. It shall be all our studies to oblige and recompense the dear lady to the utmost of our power, for what she has suffered from the unhappy man.

We are, dear madam,
your obliged and faithful servants,

CHARLOTTE } MONTAGUE.
MARTHA }

DEAR MISS HOWE,

We join in the above request of Miss Charlotte and Miss Patty Montague, for your favour and interest; being convinced that the accident was an accident; and no plot or contrivance of a wretch too full of them.

We are madam,
your most obedient humble servants,

M.
SARAH SADLEIR.
ELIZ. LAWRANCE.

DEAR MISS HOWE,

After what is written above, by names and characters of such unquestionable honour, I might have been excused signing a name almost as hateful to myself, as I KNOW it is to you. But the *above* will have it so. Since therefore I *must* write, it shall be truth; which is, that, if I may be once more admitted to pay my duty to the most deserving and most injured of her sex, I will be content to do it with a halter about my neck; and, attended by a parson on my right-hand, and the hangman on my left, be doomed, at her will, either to the church or the gallows.

Your most humble servant,

Tuesday, July 18. ROBERT LOVELACE.

LETTER LXV.

MR. BELFORD TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Sunday night, July 16.

WHAT a cursed piece of work hast thou made of it, with the most excellent of women. Thou mayest be in earnest, or in jest, as thou wilt; but the poor lady will not be long either thy sport, or the sport of fortune!

I will give thee an account of a scene that wants but her affecting pen to represent it justly; and it would wring all the black blood out of thy callous heart.

Thou only, who art the author of her calamities, shouldst have attended her in her prison, I am unequal to such a task: nor know I any other man but would.

This last act, however unintended by thee, yet a consequence of thy general orders, and too likely to be thought agreeable to thee, by those who know thy other villanies by her, has finished thy barbarous work. And I advise thee to trumpet forth every where, how much in earnest thou art to marry her, whether true or not.

Thou mayest *safely* do it. She will not live to put thee to the trial; and it will a little palliate for thy enormous usage of her, and be a means to make mankind, who know not what I know of the matter, herd a little longer with thee, and forbear to hunt thee to thy fellow-savages in the Lybian wilds and desarts.

Your messenger found me at Edgware, expecting to dinner with me several friends, whom I had invited three days before. I sent apologies to them, as in a case of life and death; and speeded

to town to the wicked woman's: for how knew I but shocking attempts might be made upon her by the cursed wretches; perhaps by your connivance, in order to mortify her into your measures?

Little knows the public what villanies are committed by vile wretches in these abominable houses upon innocent creatures drawn into their snares.

Finding the lady not there, I hastened away to the officer's, although Sally told me, that she had been just come from thence; and that she had refused to see her, or (as she sent down word) any body else; being resolved to have the remainder of that Sunday to herself, as it might, perhaps, be the last she should ever see.

I had the same thing told me, when I got thither.

I sent up to let her know, that I came with a commission to set her at liberty. I was afraid of sending up the name of a man known to be your friend. She absolutely refused to see *any man*, however, for that day, or to answer further to any thing said from me.

Having therefore informed myself of all that the officer, and his wife, and servant, could acquaint me with, as well in relation to the horrid arrest, as to her behaviour, and the women's to her; and her ill state of health; I went back to Sinclair's, as I will still call her, and heard the three women's story. From all which, I am enabled to give you the following shocking particulars: which may serve till I can see the unhappy lady herself tomorrow, if then I gain admittance to her. You will find, that I have been very minute in my inquiries.

Your villain it was that *set* the poor lady, and had the impudence to appear, and abet the sheriff's officers in the cursed transaction. He thought,

no doubt, that he was doing the most acceptable service to his blessed master. They had got a chair; the head ready up, as soon as service was over. And as she came out of the church, at the door fronting Bedford Street, the officers, stepping to her, whispered, that they had an action against her.

She was terrified, trembled, and turned pale.

Action! said she. What is that?——I have committed *no bad action!*——Lord bless me! men, what mean you?

That you are our prisoner, madam.

Prisoner, Sirs!—what—how—why—what have I done?

You must go with us. Be pleased, madam, to step into this chair.

With *you!*—with *men!* Must go with *men!*—I am not used to go with *strange men!*——Indeed you must excuse me!

We can't excuse you: we are sheriff's officers. We have a writ against you. You *must* go with us, and you shall know at whose suit.

Suit! said the charming innocent; I don't know what you mean. Pray, men, don't lay hands upon me; (they offering to put her into the chair) I am not used to be thus treated—I have done nothing to deserve it.

She then spied thy villain—O thou wretch, said she, where is thy vile master?—Am I again to be *his prisoner?* Help, good people!

A crowd had before begun to gather.

My master is in the country, madam, many miles off. If you please to go with these men, they will treat you civilly.

The people were most of them struck with compassion. A fine young creature!—A thousand pities, cried some. While some few threw out vile

and shocking reflections! But a gentleman interposed, and demanded to see the fellows' authority.

They showed it. Is your name Clarissa Harlowe, madam? said he.

Yes, yes, indeed, ready to sink, my name *was* Clarissa Harlowe:—but it is now *wretchedness!*—Lord be merciful to me, what is to come next?

You *must* go with these men, madam, said the gentleman: they have authority for what they do.

He pitied her, and retired.

Indeed you must said one chairman.

Indeed you must, said the other.

Can nobody, joined in another gentleman, be applied to, who will see that so fine a creature is not ill used?

Thy villain answered, orders were given particularly for that. She had rich relations. She need but ask and have. She would only be carried to the officer's house, till matters could be made up. The people she had lodged with, loved her: but she had left her lodgings privately.

O! had she those tricks already? cried one or two.

She heard not this—but said—well, if I must go, I must—I cannot resist—but I will not be carried to the woman's; I will rather die at your feet, than be carried to the woman's.

You won't be carried there, madam, cried thy fellow.

Only to my house, madam, said one of the officers.

Where is that?—In High Holborn, madam.

I know not where High Holborn is: but any where, except to the woman's.—But am I to go with *men* only?

Looking about her, and seeing the three passages, to wit, that leading to Henrietta Street, that

to King Street, and the fore-right one, to Bedford Street, crowded, she started—any where—any where, said she, but to the woman's! and stepping into the chair, threw herself on the seat, in the utmost distress and confusion—carry me, carry me out of sight—cover me——cover me up——for ever——were her words.

Thy villain drew the curtain: she had not power: and they went away with her through a vast crowd of people.

Here I must rest. I can write no more at present.

Only, Lovelace, remember, *all this was to a Clarissa!*

* * *

The unhappy lady fainted away when she was taken out of the chair at the officer's house.

Several people followed the chair to the very house, which is in a wretched court. Sally was there; and satisfied some of the inquirers, that the young gentlewoman would be exceedingly well used: and they soon dispersed.

Dorcas was also there; but came not in her sight. Sally, as a favour, offered to carry her to her former lodgings: but she declared, they should carry her thither a corpse, if they did.

Very gentle usage the women boast of: so would a vulture, could it speak, with the entrails of its prey upon its rapacious talons. Of this you'll judge from what I have to recite.

She asked, what was meant by this usage of her? People told me, said she, that I *must* go with the men:—that they had authority to take me: so I submitted. But now, what is to be the end of this disgraceful violence?

The end, said the vile Sally Martin, is, for honest people to come at their own.

Bless me! have I taken away any thing that belongs to those who have obtained this power over me?—I have left very valuable things behind me: but have taken nothing away that is not my own.

And who do you think, *Miss Harlowe;* for I understand, said the cursed creature, you are not married; who do you think is to pay for your board and your lodgings? such handsome lodgings! for so long a time as your's were at Mrs. Sinclair's.

Lord have mercy upon me!—Miss Martin! (I think you are Miss Martin)—And is this the cause of such a disgraceful insult upon me in the open streets?

And cause enough, *Miss Harlowe* (fond of gratifying her jealous revenge, by calling her *miss)*—one hundred and fifty guineas, or pounds, is no small sum to lose—and by a young creature who would have bilked her lodgings.

You amaze me, Miss Martin!—What language do you talk in?—*Bilk my lodgings!*—What is that?

She stood astonished, and silent for a few moments.

But recovering herself, and turning from her to the window, she wrung her hands, [the cursed Sally showed me how!] and lifting them up——*Now,* Lovelace: now indeed do I think I *ought* to forgive thee!—But who shall forgive Clarissa Harlowe!—O my sister!—O my brother!—Tender mercies were your cruelties to *this!*

After a pause, her handkerchief drying up her falling tears, she turned to Sally: *now,* have I nothing to do but acquiesce—only let me say, that if this aunt of yours, this Mrs. Sinclair, or this man, this Mr. Lovelace, come near me; or if I am carried to the horrid house (for that, I suppose, is the design of this new outrage); God be merciful to the poor Clarissa Harlowe!—Look to the

consequence!——Look, I charge you, to the consequence!

The vile wretch told her, it was not designed to carry her any whither against her will: but, if it were, they should take care not to be frighted again by a *penknife*.

She cast up her eyes to heaven, and was silent—and went to the furthest corner of the room, and, sitting down, threw her handkerchief over her face.

Sally asked her several questions; but not answering her, she told her, she would wait upon her by-and-by, when she had found her speech.

She ordered the people to press her to eat and drink. She must be fasting.—Nothing but her prayers and tears, poor thing!—were the merciless devil's words, as she owned to me.—Dost think I did not curse her?

She went away; and, after her own dinner, returned.

The unhappy lady, by this devil's account of her, then seemed either mortified into meekness, or to have made a resolution not to be provoked by the insults of this cursed creature.

Sally inquired, in her presence, whether she had eat or drank any thing; and being told by the woman, that she could not prevail upon her to taste a morsel, or drink a drop, she said, This is wrong, *Miss Harlowe!* very wrong!—Your religion, I think, should teach you, that starving yourself is self-murder.

She answered not.

The wretch owned, she was resolved to make her speak.

She asked, if Mabell should attend her, till it were seen what her friends would do for her, in discharge of the debt? Mabell, said she, has not

yet earned the clothes you were so good as to give her.

Am I not worthy an answer, *Miss Harlowe!*

I would answer you (said the sweet sufferer, without any emotion) if I knew how.

I have ordered pen, ink, and paper, to be brought you, *Miss Harlowe*. There they are. I know you love writing. You may write to whom you please. Your friend, Miss Howe, will expect to hear from you.

I have no friend, said she, I deserve none.

Rowland, for that's the officer's name, told her, she had friends enow to pay the debt, if she would write.

She would trouble nobody; she had no friends; was all they could get from her, while Sally staid: but yet spoken with a patience of spirit, as if she enjoyed her griefs.

The insolent creature went away, ordering them, in the lady's hearing, to be very civil to her, and to let her want for nothing. Now had she, she owned, the triumph of her heart over this haughty beauty, who kept them all at such a distance in their own house!

What thinkest thou, Lovelace, of this!—This wretch's triumph was over a Clarissa!

About six in the evening, Rowland's wife pressed her to drink tea. She said, she had rather have a glass of water; for her tongue was ready to cleave to the roof of her mouth.

The woman brought her a glass, and some bread and butter. She tried to taste the latter; but could not swallow it: but eagerly drank the water; lifting up her eyes in thankfulness for that!!!

The divine Clarissa, Lovelace—reduced to rejoice for a cup of cold water!—By whom *reduced!*

About nine o'clock she asked if any body were to be her bedfellow.

Their maid, if she pleased; or, as she was so weak and ill, the girl should sit up with her, if she chose she should.

She chose to be alone both night and day, she said. But might she not be trusted with the keys of the room where she was to lie down; for she should not put off her clothes!

That, they told her, could not be.

She was afraid not, she said.—But indeed she would not get away, if she could.

They told me, that they had but one bed, besides that they lay in themselves, (which they would fain have had her accept of) and besides *that* their maid lay in, in a garret, which they called a hole of a garret: and that *that* one bed was the prisoner's bed; which they made several apologies to me about. I suppose it is shocking enough.

But the lady would not lie in theirs. Was she not a prisoner? she said—let her have the prisoner's room.

Yet they owned that she started, when she was conducted thither. But recovering herself, Very well, said she—why should not all be of a piece? —Why should not my wretchedness be complete?

She found fault, that all the fastenings were on the outside, and none within; and said, she could not trust herself in a room, where others could come in at their pleasure, and she not go out. She had not *been used* to it!!!

Dear, dear soul!—My tears flow as I write!—Indeed, Lovelace, she had not been used to such treatment.

They assured her, that it was as much their duty

to protect her from other persons' insults, as from escaping herself.

Then they were people of more honour, she said, than she had been of late used to.

She asked, if they knew Mr. Lovelace?

No, was their answer.

Have you heard of him?

No.

Well then, you may be good sort of folks in your way.

Pause here a moment, Lovelace!—and reflect—I must.

* * *

Again they asked her, if they should send any word to her lodgings?

These are my lodgings now; are they not?—was all her answer.

She sat up in a chair all night, the back against the door; having, it seems, thrust a broken piece of a poker through the staples where a bolt had been on the inside.

* * *

Next morning Sally and Polly both went to visit her.

She had begged of Sally the day before, that she might not see Mrs. Sinclair, nor Dorcas, nor the broken-toothed servant, called William.

Polly would have ingratiated herself with her; and pretended to be concerned for her misfortunes. But she took no more notice of her than of the other.

They asked, if she had any commands?—If she *had*, she only need to mention what they were, and she should be obeyed.

None at all, she said.

How did she like the people of the house? Were they civil to her?

Pretty well, considering she had no money to give them.

Would she accept of any money? They could put it to her account.

She would contract no debts.

Had she any money about her?

She meekly put her hand in her pocket, and pulled out half a guinea, and a little silver. Yes, I have a little.———But here should be fees paid, I believe. Should there not? I have heard of entrance-money to compound for not being stript. But these people are very civil people, I fancy; for they have not offered to take away my clothes.

They have orders to be civil to you.

It is very kind.

But we two will bail you, *miss*, if you will go back with us to Mrs. Sinclair's.

Not for the world.

Hers are very handsome apartments.

The fitter for those who own them!

These are very sad ones.

The fitter for *me!*

You may be very happy yet, *miss*, if you will.

I hope I shall.

If you refuse to eat or drink, we will give bail, and take you with us.

Then I will *try* to eat and drink. Any thing but go with you.

Will you not send to your new lodgings; the people will be frighted.

So they will, if I send. So they will, if they know where I am.

But have you no things to send for from thence?

There is what will pay for their lodgings and trouble: I shall not lessen their security.

But perhaps letters or messages may be left for you there.

I have very few friends; and to those I *have*, I will spare the mortification of knowing what has befallen me.

We are surprised at your indifference *Miss* Harlowe. Will you not write to any of your friends?

No.

Why, you don't think of tarrying *here* always?

I shall not *live* always.

Do you think you are to stay here as long as you live?

That's as it shall please God, and those who have brought me hither.

Should you like to be at liberty?

I am miserable!—What is liberty to the miserable, but to be *more* miserable?

How miserable, *miss?*—You may make yourself as happy as you please.

I hope *you* are both happy.

We are.

May you be more and more happy!

But we wish *you* to be so too.

I shall never be of your opinion, I believe, as to what happiness is.

What do you take our opinion of happiness to be?

To live at Mrs. Sinclair's.

Perhaps, said Sally, we were once as squeamish and narrow-minded as you.

How came it over with you?

Because we saw the ridiculousness of prudery.

Do you come hither to persuade me to hate prudery, as you call it, as much as you do?

We came to offer our service to you.

It is out of your power to serve me.

Perhaps not.

It is not in my inclination to trouble you.

You may be worse offered.

Perhaps I may.

You are mighty short, *miss.*

As I wish your visit to be, ladies.

They owned to me, that they cracked their fans, and laughed.

Adieu, perverse beauty!

Your servant, ladies.

Adieu, haughty airs!

You see me humbled—

As you deserve, *Miss* Harlowe. Pride will have a fall.

Better fall, with what *you* call pride, than stand with meanness.

Who does?

I had once a *better* opinion of you, Miss Horton!—Indeed you should not insult the miserable.

Neither should the *miserable,* said Sally, insult people for their civility.

I should be sorry if I did.

Mrs. Sinclair shall attend you by-and-by, to know if you have any commands for her,

I have no wish for any liberty, but that of refusing to see her, and *one* more person.

What we came for, was to know if you had any proposals to make for your enlargement.

Then, it seems, the officer put in. You have very good friends, madam, I understand. Is it not better that you make it up? Charges will run high. A hundred and fifty guineas are easier paid than two hundred. Let these ladies bail you, and go along with them; or write to your friends to make it up.

Sally said, there is a gentleman who saw you taken, and was so much moved for you, *Miss Harlowe,* that he would gladly advance the money for you, and leave you to pay it when you can.

See, Lovelace, what cursed devils these are! This is the way, we know, that many an innocent

heart is thrown upon keeping, and then upon the town. But for these wretches thus to go to work with such an angel as this!—How glad would have been the devilish Sally, to have had the least handle to report to thee a listening ear, or patient spirit, upon this hint?

Sir, said she, with high indignation, to the officer, did not you say last night, that it was as much your business to protect me from the insults of others, as from escaping?—Cannot I be permitted to see whom I please, and to refuse admittance to those I like not?

Your creditors, madam, will expect to see you.

Not, if I declare I will not treat with them.

Then, madam, you will be sent to prison.

Prison, friend!—What dost thou call thy house?

Not a prison, madam.

Why these iron-barred windows, then? Why these double locks and bolts all on the outside, none on the in?

And down she dropt into her chair, and they could not get another word from her. She threw her handkerchief over her face, as once before, which was soon wet with tears; and grievously, they own, she sobbed.

Gentle treatment, Lovelace!—Perhaps thou, as well as these wretches, wilt think it so!

Sally then ordered a dinner, and said, they would soon be back again, and see that she eat and drank, *as a good christian should,* comporting herself to her condition, and making the best of it.

What has not this charming creature suffered, what has she not gone through, in these last three months, that I know of!—Who would think such a delicately framed person could have sustained what she has sustained! We sometimes talk of bravery, of courage, of fortitude!—Here they are

in perfection!—Such bravoes as thou and I should never have been able to support ourselves under half the persecutions, the disappointments, and contumelies, that *she* has met with; but, like cowards, should have slid out of the world, basely, by some back-door; that is to say, by a sword, by a pistol, by a halter, or knife;—but here is a fine-principled woman, who, by dint of this noble consideration, as I imagine [what else can support her?]—That she has *not* deserved *the evils she contends with;* and that *this world is designed but as a transitory state of probation;* and that she is *travelling to another and better;* puts up with all the hardships of the *journey;* and is not to be diverted from her course by the attacks of *thieves* and *robbers,* or any other terrors and difficulties; *being assured of an ample reward at the end of it.*

If thou thinkest this reflection uncharacteristic from a companion and friend of thine, imaginest thou, that I profited nothing by my long attendance on my uncle in his dying state; and from the pious reflections of the good clergyman, who, day by day, at the poor man's own request, visited and prayed by him?—And could I have another such instance *as this,* to bring all these reflections home to me?

Then who can write of good persons, and of good subjects, and be capable of *admiring them,* and not be made serious for the *time?* And hence may we gather what a benefit to the morals of men the keeping of *good* company must be; while those who keep only *bad,* must necessarily more and more harden, and be hardened.

* * *

'Tis twelve of the clock, Sunday night—I can think of nothing but of this excellent creature. Her distresses fill my head and heart. I was

drowsy for a quarter of an hour; but the fit is gone off. And I will continue the melancholy subject from the information of these wretches. Enough, I dare say, will arise in the visit I shall make, if admitted to-morrow, to send by thy servant, as to the way I am likely to find her in.

After the women had left her, she complained of her head and her heart; and seemed terrified with apprehensions of being carried once more to Sinclair's.

Refusing any thing for breakfast, Mrs. Rowland came up to her, and told her (as these wretches owned they had ordered her, for fear she should starve herself) that she *must* and *should* have tea, and bread and butter: and that, as she had friends who could support her, if she wrote to them, it was a wrong thing, both for herself and *them*, to starve herself thus.

If it be for your *own sakes*, said she, that is another thing: let coffee, or tea, or chocolate, or what you will, be got: and put down a chicken to my account every day, if you please, and eat it yourselves. I will taste it, if I can. I would do nothing to hinder you. I have friends will pay you liberally, when they know I am gone.

They wondered, they told her, at her strange composure in such distresses.

They were *nothing*, she said, *to what she had suffered already* from the vilest of all men. The disgrace of seizing her in the street; multitudes of people about her; shocking imputations wounding her ears; had indeed been very affecting to her. But that was over.—Every thing soon would!—And she should be still *more* composed, were it not for the apprehensions of seeing one man, and one woman; and being tricked or forced back to the vilest house in the world.

Then were it not better to give way to the two gentlewomen's offer to bail her?—They could tell her, it was a very kind proffer; and what was not to be met with every day.

She believed so.

The ladies might, possibly, dispense with her going back to the house to which she had such an antipathy. Then the compassionate gentleman, who was inclined to make it up with her creditors on her own bond—it was str'nge to them she hearkened not to so generous a proposal.

Did the two ladies tell you who the gentleman was?—Or did they say any more on that subject?

Yes, they did! and hinted to me, said the woman, that you had nothing to do, but to receive a visit from the gentleman, and the money, they believed, would be laid down on your own bond or note.

She was startled.

I charge you, said she, as you will answer it one day to my friends, that you bring no gentleman into my company. I charge you don't. If you do, you know not what may be the consequence.

They apprehended no bad consequence, they said, in doing their duty: and if she knew not her own good, her friends would thank them for taking any innocent steps to serve her, though against her will.

Don't push me upon extremities, man!—Don't make me desperate, woman!—I have no small difficulty, notwithstanding the seeming composure you just now took notice of, to bear, as I ought to bear, the evils I suffer. But if you bring a man or men to me, be the pretence *what* it will—

She stopt there, and looked so earnestly, and so wildly, they said, that they did not know but she would do some harm to herself, if they disobeyed

her; and that would be a sad thing in *their* house, and might be their ruin. They therefore promised, that no man should be brought to her but by her own consent.

Mrs. Rowland prevailed on her to drink a dish of tea, and taste some bread and butter, about eleven on Saturday morning: which she probably did, to have an excuse not to dine with the women when they returned.

But she would not quit her *prison-room*, as she called it, to go into their parlour.

"Unbarred windows, and a lightsomer apartment, she said, had too cheerful an appearance for her mind."

A shower falling, as she spoke, "What, said she, looking up, do the elements weep for me?"

At another time, "the light of the sun was irksome to her. The sun seemed to shine in to mock her woes."

"Methought, added she, the sun darting in, and gilding these iron bars, plays upon me, like the two women, who came to insult my haggard looks by the word *beauty;* and my dejected heart, by the word *haughty-airs!*"

Sally came again at dinner-time, *to see how she fared,* as she told her; and that she did not starve herself: and, as she wanted to have some talk with her, if she gave her leave, she would dine with her.

I cannot eat.

You must try, *Miss Harlowe.*

And, dinner being ready just then, she offered her hand, and desired her to walk down.

No; she would not stir out of her *prison-room.*

These sullen airs won't do, *Miss Harlowe:* indeed they won't.

She was silent.

You will have harder usage than any you have ever yet known, I can tell you, if you come not into some humour to make matters up.

She was still silent.

Come, *miss*, walk down to dinner. Let me entreat you, do. Miss Horton is below: she was once your favourite.

She waited for an answer: but received none.

We came to make some proposals to you, for your good; though you affronted us so lately. And we would not let Mrs. Sinclair come in person, because we thought to oblige you.

This is indeed obliging.

Come, give me your hand, *Miss Harlowe*: you *are* obliged to me, I can tell you that: and let us go down to Miss Horton.

Excuse me: I will not stir out of this room.

Would you have me and Miss Horton dine in this filthy bed-room?

It is not a bed-room to me. I have not been in bed; nor will, while I am here.

And yet you care not, as I see, to leave the house. —And so you won't go down, *Miss Harlowe?*

I won't, except I am forced to it.

Well, well, let it alone. I sha'n't ask Miss Horton to dine in this room, I assure you. I will send up a plate.

And away the little saucy toad fluttered down.

When they had dined, up they came together.

Well, miss, you would not eat any thing, it seems?—Very pretty sullen airs these!—No wonder *the honest gentleman had such a hand with you.*

She only held up her hands and eyes; the tears trickling down her cheeks.

Insolent devils!—how much more cruel and insulting are bad women, even than bad men!

Methinks, *miss,* said Sally, you are a little *soily,* to what we have seen you. Pity such a nice lady should not have changes of apparel! Why won't you send to your lodgings for linen, at least?

I am not nice now.

Miss looks well and clean in any thing, said Polly. But, dear madam, why won't you send to your lodgings? Were it but in kindness to the *people?* They must have a concern about you. And your Miss Howe will wonder what's become of you; for, no doubt, you correspond.

She turned from them, and, to herself, said, *Too much! Too much!*—She tossed her handkerchief, wet before with her tears, from her, and held her apron to her eyes.

Don't weep, miss! said the vile Polly.

Yet *do,* cried the viler Sally, it will be a relief. Nothing, as Mr. Lovelace once told *me,* dries sooner than tears. For once I too wept mightily.

I could not bear the recital of this with patience. Yet I cursed them not so much as I should have done, had I not had a mind to get from them all the particulars of their *gentle* treatment: and this for two reasons; the one, that I might stab thee to the heart with the repetition; the other that I might know upon what terms I am likely to see the unhappy lady to-morrow.

Well, but, *Miss Harlowe,* cried Sally, do you think these *forlorn airs* pretty? You are a good Christian, child. Mrs. Rowland tells me, she has got you a bible-book—O there it lies!—I make no doubt, but you have doubled down the *useful places,* as honest Matt. Prior says.

Then rising, and taking it up—ay, so you have—the *Book of Job!* One opens naturally here, I see—*my* mamma made me a fine bible-scholar.—*Ecclesiasticus* too!—That's Apocrypha, as they call

it—you see, Miss Horton, I know something of the book.

They proposed once more to bail her, and to go home with them. A motion which she received with the same indignation as before.

Sally told her, that she had written in a very favourable manner, in her behalf, to you; and that she every hour expected an answer; and made no doubt, that you would come up with the messenger, and generously pay the whole debt, and ask her pardon for neglecting it.

This disturbed her so much, that they feared she would have fallen into fits. She could not bear your name, she said. She hoped she should never see you more: and were you to intrude yourself, dreadful consequences might follow.

Surely, they said, she would be glad to be released from her confinement.

Indeed she *should*, now they had begun to alarm her with *his* name, who was the author of all her woes: and who, she now saw plainly, gave way to this new outrage, in order to bring her to his own infamous terms.

Why then, they asked, would she not write to her friends, to pay Mrs. Sinclair's demand?

Because she hoped she should not long trouble any body; and because she knew, that the payment of the money, if she should be able to pay it, was not what was aimed at.

Sally owned, that she told her, that, truly, she had thought herself as well descended, and as well educated, as *herself*, though not entitled to such considerable fortunes. And had the impudence to insist upon it to me to be the truth.

She had the insolence to add, to the lady, that she had as much reason as *she*, to expect Mr. Lovelace would marry her; he having contracted to do

so *before* he knew Miss Clarissa Harlowe: and that she had it under his hand and seal too—or else he had not obtained his end: therefore it was not likely she should be so officious as to do his work against herself, if she thought Mr. Lovelace had designs upon her, like what she *presumed* to hint at: that, for her part, her only view was, to procure liberty to a young gentlewoman, who made those things grievous to her which would not be made such a rout about by any body else—and to procure the payment of a just debt to her friend Mrs. Sinclair.

She besought them to leave her. She wanted not these instances, she said, to convince her of the company she was in: and told them, that, to get rid of such visitors, and of the still worse she was apprehensive of, she would write to one friend to raise the money for her, though it would be death for her to do so; because that friend could not do it without her mother, in whose eye it would give a selfish appearance to a friendship that was above all sordid alloys.

They advised her to write out of hand.

But how much must I write for? What is the sum? Should I not have had a bill delivered me? God knows, I took not your lodgings. But he that could treat me as he had done, could do this!

Don't speak against Mr. Lovelace, *Miss Harlowe*. He is a man I greatly esteem [cursed toad!] And 'bating that he will take his advantage, where he can, of *us* silly credulous women, he is a man of honour.

She lifted up her hands and eyes, instead of speaking: and well she might! For any words she could have used, could not have expressed the anguish she must feel, on being comprehended in the US.

She must write for one hundred and fifty guineas, at least: two hundred, if she were short of money, might as well be written for.

Mrs. Sinclair, she said, had all her clothes. Let them be sold, *fairly* sold, and the money go as far as it would go. She had also a few other valuables; but no money (none at all) but the poor half guinea, and the little silver they had seen. She would give bond to pay all that her apparel, and the other matters she had, would fall short of. She had great effects belonging to her of right. Her bond would, and must, be paid, were it for a thousand pounds. But her clothes she should never want. She believed, if not too much undervalued, those, and her few valuables, would answer every thing. She wished for no surplus but to discharge the last expenses; and forty shillings would do as well for those as forty pounds. 'Let my ruin, said she, lifting up her eyes, be LARGE! Let it be COMPLETE, *in this life!*—For a *composition*, let it be COMPLETE.'—And there she stopped *.

The wretches could not help wishing to me for the opportunity of making such a purchase for their own wear. How I cursed *them!* and, in my heart, *thee!*—But too probable, thought I, that this vile Sally Martin may hope [though thou art incapable of it] that *her* Lovelace, as she has the assurance, behind thy back, to call thee, may present her with some of the poor lady's spoils?

Will not Mrs. Sinclair, proceeded she, think my clothes a security, till they can be sold? They are very good clothes. A suit or two but just put on, as it were; never worn. They cost much more than is demanded of me. *My father loved to see me fine*—all shall go. But let me have the par-

* No doubt alluding to her father's extensive curse.

ticulars of her demand. I suppose I must pay for my *destroyer* [that was her well-adapted word!] and his servants, as well as for myself—I am content to do so.—Indeed I am content to do so—I am above wishing, that any body, who could *thus* act, should be so much as expostulated with, as to the justice and equity of this payment. If I have but enough to pay the demand, I shall be satisfied; and will leave the baseness of such an action as this, as an aggravation of a guilt which I thought could *not* be aggravated.

I own, Lovelace, I have malice in this particularity, in order to sting thee to the heart. And, let me ask thee, what now cans't thou think of thy barbarity, thy unprecedented barbarity, in having reduced a person of her rank, fortune, talents, and virtue, so low?

The wretched women, it must be owned, act but in their profession; a profession thou hast been the principal means of reducing these two to act in. And they know what thy designs have been, and how far prosecuted. It is, in their opinions, using her *gently*, that they have forborne to bring to her the woman so justly odious to her; and that they have not threatened her with the introducing to her strange men: nor yet brought into her company their *spirit breakers*, and *humbling drones* (fellows not allowed to carry stings) to trace and force her back to their detested house; and, when there, into all their measures.

Till I came, they thought thou wouldst not be displeased at any thing she suffered, that could help to mortify her into a state of shame and disgrace; and bring her to comply with thy views, when thou shouldst come to release her from these wretches, as from a greater evil than cohabiting with thee.

When thou considerest these things, thou wilt

make no difficulty of believing, that this their own account of their behaviour to this admirable woman has been far short of their insults: and the less, when I tell thee, that, all together, their usage had such effects upon her, that they left her in violent hysterics; ordering an apothecary to be sent for, if she should continue in them, and be worse; and particularly (as they had done from the first) that they kept out of her way any edged or pointed instrument; especially a penknife; which, pretending to mend a pen, they said, she might ask for.

At twelve Saturday night, Rowland sent to tell them, that she was so ill, that he knew not what might be the issue; and wished her out of his house.

And this made them as heartily wish to hear from you. For their messenger, to their great surprise, was not then returned from M. Hall. And they were sure he must have reached that place by Friday night.

Early on Sunday morning, both devils went to see how she did. They had such an account of her weakness, lowness, and anguish, that they forbore (out of compassion, they said, finding their visits so disagreeable to her) to see her. But their apprehension of what might be the issue was, no doubt, their principal consideration: nothing else could have softened such flinty bosoms.

They sent for the apothecary Rowland had had to her, and gave him, and Rowland, and his wife and maid, strict orders, many times repeated, for the utmost care to be taken of her—no doubt, with an Old Bailey forecast. And they sent up to let her know what orders they had given: but that, understanding she had taken something to compose her, they would not disturb her.

She had scrupled, it seems, to admit the apothe-

cary's visit over night, because he was a MAN. Nor could she be prevailed upon to see him, till they pleaded *their own safety* to her.

They went again, from church, [Lord, Bob, these creatures go to church !] but she sent them down word, that she must have all the remainder of the day to herself.

When I first came, and told them of thy execrations for what they had done, and joined my own to them, they were astonished. The mother said, she had thought she had known Mr. Lovelace better ; and expected thanks, and not curses.

While I was with them, came back halting and cursing, most horribly, their messenger; by reason of the ill usage he had received from you, instead of the reward he had been taught to expect for the supposed good news that he carried down—a pretty fellow, art thou not, to abuse people for the consequences of thy own faults ?

Dorcas, whose acquaintance this fellow is, and who recommended him for the journey, had conditioned with him, it seems, for a share in the expected bounty from you. Had she been to have had *her* share made good, I wish thou hadst broken every bone in his skin.

Under what shocking disadvantages, and with this addition to them, that I am thy friend and intimate, am I to make a visit to this unhappy lady to-morrow morning ! In thy *name*, too !—Enough to be refused, that I am of a *sex*, to which, for *thy* sake, she has so justifiable an aversion : nor, having such a tyrant of a father, and such an implacable brother, has she reason to make an exception in favour of *any* of it on *their* accounts.

It is three o'clock. I will close here ; and take a little rest : what I have written will be a proper preparative for what shall offer by and by.

Thy servant is not to return without a letter, he tells me; and that thou expectest him back in the morning. Thou hast fellows enough where thou art at thy command. If I find any difficulty in seeing the lady, thy messenger shall post away with this.—Let him look to broken bones, and other consequences, if what he carries answer not thy expectation. But, if I am admitted, thou shalt have *this* and the result of my audience both together. In the former case, thou mayest send another servant to wait the next advices, from

J. BELFORD.

LETTER LXVI.

MR. BELFORD TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Monday July 17.

About six this morning I went to Rowland's. Mrs. Sinclair was to follow me, in order to dismiss the action; but not to come in sight.

Rowland, upon inquiry, told me, that the lady was extremely ill; and that she had desired, that no one but his wife or maid should come near her.

I said, I *must* see her. I had told him my business over night, and I *must* see her.

His wife went up: but returned presently, saying, she could not get her to speak to her; yet that her eyelids moved; though she either would not, or could not, open them, to look up at her.

Oons, woman, said I, the lady may be in a fit: the lady may be dying—let me go up. Show me the way.

A horrid hole of a house, in an alley they call a court; stairs wretchedly narrow, even to the first floor rooms: and into a den they led me, with

broken walls, which had been papered, as I saw by a multitude of tacks, and some torn bits held on by the rusty heads.

The floor indeed was clean; but the ceiling was smoked with variety of figures, and initials of names, that had been the woeful employment of wretches who had no other way to amuse themselves.

A bed at one corner, with coarse curtains tacked up at the feet to the ceiling; because the curtain-rings were broken off; but a coverlid upon it with a cleanish look, though plaguily in tatters, and the corners tied up in tassels, that the rents in it might go no further.

The windows dark and double-barred, the tops boarded up to save mending; and only a little four-paned eylet-hole of a casement to let in the air; more, however, coming in at broken panes, than could come in at that.

Four old Turkey-worked chairs, bustern-bottomed, the stuffing staring out.

An old, tottering, worm-eaten table, that had more nails bestowed in mending it to make it stand, than the table cost fifty years ago, when new.

On the mantle-piece was an iron shove-up candlestick, with a lighted candle in it, twinkle, twinkle, twinkle, four of them, I suppose, for a penny.

Near that, on the same shelf, was an old looking glass, cracked through the middle, breaking out into a thousand points; the crack given it, perhaps, in a rage, by some poor creature, to whom it gave the representation of his heart's woes in his face.

The chimney had two half tiles in it on one side, and one whole one on the other; which showed it had been in better plight; but now the very mortar

had followed the rest of the tiles in every other place, and left the bricks bare.

An old half-barred stove-grate was in the chimney; and in that a large stone-bottle without a neck, filled with baleful yew, as an ever-green, withered southernwood, dead sweet-briar, and sprigs of rue in flower.

To finish the shocking description, in a dark nook stood an old broken-bottomed cane couch, without a squab, or coverlid, sunk at one corner, and unmortised by the failing of one of its worm-eaten legs, which lay in two pieces under the wretched piece of furniture it could no longer support.

And this, thou horrid Lovelace, was the bedchamber of the divine Clarissa!!!

I had leisure to cast my eye on these things: for, going up softly, the poor lady turned not about at our entrance; nor, till I spoke, moved her head.

She was kneeling in a corner of the room, near the dismal window, against the table, on an old bolster (as it seemed to be) of the cane couch, half-covered with her handkerchief; her back to the door; which was only shut to, [no need of fastenings!] her arms crossed upon the table, the fore-finger of her right hand in her Bible. She had perhaps been reading in it, and could read no longer. Paper, pens, ink, lay by her book on the table. Her dress was white lustring, exceeding neat; but her stays seemed not tight-laced. I was told afterwards, that her laces had been cut, when she fainted away at her entrance into this cursed place; and she had not been solicitous enough about her dress, to send for others. Her head-dress was a little discomposed; her charming hair in

natural ringlets, as you have heretofore described it, but a little tangled, as if not lately combed, irregularly shading one side of the loveliest neck in the world; as her disordered rumpled handkerchief did the other. Her face [O how altered from what I had seen it! Yet lovely in spite of all her griefs and sufferings!] was reclined, when we entered, upon her crossed arms; but so, as not more than one side of it to be hid.

When I surveyed the room around, and the kneeling lady, sunk with majesty too in her white flowing robes, (for she had not on a hoop) spreading the dark, though not dirty, floor, and illuminating that horrid corner; her linen beyond imagination white, considering that she had not been undressed ever since she had been here; I thought my concern would have choaked me. Something rose in my throat, I know not what, which made me, for a moment, guggle, as it were, for speech! Which, at last, forcing its way, Con—Con—confound you both, said I, to the man and woman, is this an apartment for such a lady? And could the cursed devils of her own sex, who visited this suffering angel, see her, and leave her, in so d—n'd a nook?

Sir, we would have had the lady to accept of our own bed-chamber: but she refused it. We are poor people—and we expect nobody will stay with us longer than they can help it.

You are people chosen purposely, I doubt not, by the d—n'd woman who has employed you: and if your usage of this lady has been but half as bad as your house, you had better never to have seen the light.

Up then raised the charming sufferer her lovely face; but with such a significance of woe over-

spreading it, that I could not, for the soul of me, help being visibly affected.

She waved her hand two or three times towards the door, as if commanding me to withdraw; and displeased at my intrusion; but did not speak.

Permit me, madam—I will not approach one step further without your leave—permit me, for one moment, the favour of your ear!

No—no—Go, go; MAN, with an emphasis—and would have said more; but, as if struggling in vain for words, she seemed to give up speech for lost, and dropped her head down once more, with a deep sigh, upon her left arm; her right, as if she had not the use of it, (numbed, I suppose) self-moved, dropping down on her side.

O that thou hadst been there! and in my place! —But by what I then felt, in myself, I am convinced, that a capacity of being moved by the distresses of our fellow-creatures, is far from being disgraceful to a manly heart. With what pleasure, at that moment, could I have given up my own life, could I but first have avenged this charming creature, and cut the throat of her *destroyer*, as she emphatically calls thee, though the friend that I best love: and yet, at the same time, my heart and my eyes gave way to a softness of which (though not so hardened a wretch as thou) they were never before so susceptible.

I dare not approach you, dearest lady, without your leave: but on my knees I beseech you to permit me to release you from this d—n'd house, and out of the power of the accursed woman, who was the occasion of your being here!

She lifted up her sweet face once more, and beheld me on my knees. Never knew I before what it was to pray so heartily.

Are you not—are you not Mr. Belford, sir? I think your name is Belford?

It is, madam, and I ever was a worshipper of your virtues, and an advocate for you; and I come to release you from the hands you are in.

And in whose to place me?—O leave me, leave me! Let me never rise from this spot! Let me never, never more believe in man!

This moment, dearest lady, this very moment, if you please, you may depart whithersoever you think fit. You are absolutely free, and your own mistress.

I had now as lieve die here in this place, as any where. I will owe no obligation to any friend of *him* in whose company you have seen me. So, pray, sir, withdraw.

Then turning to the officer, Mr. Rowland I think your name is? I am better reconciled to your house than I was at first. If you can but engage that I shall have nobody come near me but your wife, (no *man*!) and neither of those women who have sported with my calamities; I will die with with you, and in this very corner. And you shall be well satisfied for the trouble you have had with me.—I have value enough for that—for, see, I have a diamond ring; taking it out of her bosom; and I have friends will redeem it at a high price, when I am gone.

But for *you*, sir, looking at me, I beg you to withdraw. If you mean me well, God, I hope, will reward you for your good meaning; but to the friend of my *destroyer* will I not owe an obligation.

You will owe no obligation to me, nor to any body. You have been detained for a debt you do not owe. The action is dismissed; and you will only be so good as to give me your hand into the

coach, which stands as near to this house as it could draw up. And I will either leave you at the coach-door, or attend you whithersoever you please, till I see you safe where you would wish to be.

Will you then, sir, *compel* me to be beholden to you?

You will inexpressibly oblige me, madam, to command me to do you either service or pleasure.

Why then, sir, [looking at me]—but why do you mock me in that humble posture! Rise, sir, I cannot speak to you else.

I arose.

Only, sir, take this ring. I have a sister, who will be glad to have it at the price it shall be valued at, for the *former* owner's sake!—Out of the money she gives, let this man be paid, handsomely paid: and I have a few valuables more at my lodging, (Dorcas, or the MAN William, can tell where that is;) let them, and my clothes at the wicked woman's, where you have seen me, be sold for the payment of my lodging first, and next of your *friend's* debts, that I have been arrested for, as far as they will go; only reserving enough to put me into the ground, any where, or any how, no matter—tell your friend, I wish it may be enough to satisfy the whole demand; but if it be not, he must make it up himself; or, if he think fit to draw for it on Miss Howe, she will repay it, *and with interest,* if he insist upon it.—And this, sir, if you promise to perform, you will do me, as you offer, both pleasure and service: and say you *will*, and take the ring, and withdraw. If I want to say any thing more to you (you seem to be an humane man) I will let you know—and so, sir, God bless you.

I approached her, and was going to speak—

Don't speak, sir: here's the ring.

I stood off.

And won't you take it? Won't you do this last office for me?—I have no other person to ask it of; else, believe me, I would not request it of *you*. But take it, or not, laying it upon the table—you must withdraw, sir: I am very ill. I would fain get a little rest, if I could. I find I am going to be bad again.

And offering to rise, she sunk down through excess of weakness and grief, in a fainting fit.

Why, Lovelace, wast thou not present thyself?—Why dost thou commit such villanies, as even thou art afraid to appear in; and yet puttest a weaker heart and head upon encountering with them?

The maid coming in just then, the woman and she lifted her upon the decrepit couch; and I withdrew with this Rowland; who wept like a child, and said, he never in his life was so moved.

Yet so hardened a wretch art thou, that I question whether thou wilt shed a tear at my relation!

They recovered her by hartshorn and water. I went down meanwhile; for the detestable woman had been below some time. O how did I curse her! I never before was so fluent in curses.

She tried to wheedle me; but I renounced her; and, after she had dismissed the action, sent her away crying, or pretending to cry, because of my behaviour to her.

You will observe, that I did not mention one word to the lady about *you*. I was afraid to do it. For 'twas plain, that she could not bear your name: your *friend*, and the *company* you have seen me in, were the words nearest to naming you, she could speak: and yet I wanted to clear your intention of this brutal, this sordid looking villany.

I sent up again, by Rowland's wife, when I heard

that the lady was recovered, beseeching her to quit that devilish place; and the woman assured her, that she was at full liberty to do so; for that the action was dismissed.

But she cared not to answer her: and was so weak and low, that it was almost as much out of her power as inclination, the woman told me, to speak.

I would have hastened away for my friend Doctor H. but the house is such a den, and the room she was in such a hole, that I was ashamed to be seen in it by a man of his reputation, especially with a woman of such an appearance, and in such uncommon distress; and I found there was no prevailing on her to quit it for the peoples' bed-room, which was neat and lightsome.

The strong room she was in, the wretches told me, should have been in better order, but that it was but the very morning that she was brought in, that an unhappy man had quitted it; for a more eligible prison, no doubt; since there could hardly be a worse.

Being told, that she desired not to be disturbed, and seemed inclined to doze, I took this opportunity to go to her lodgings in Covent Garden: to which Dorcas (who first discovered her there, as Will was the setter from church) had before given me a direction.

The man's name is Smith, a dealer in gloves, snuff, and such petty merchandize: his wife the shopkeeper: he a maker of the gloves they sell. Honest people, it seems.

I thought to have got the woman with me to the lady; but she was not within.

I talked with the man, and told him what had befallen the lady; owing, as I said, to a mistake of orders; and gave her the character she deserved;

and desired him to send his wife the moment she came in, to the lady; directing him whither; not doubting, that her attendance would be very welcome to her; which he promised.

He told me, that a letter was left for her there on Saturday; and, about half an hour before I came, another, superscribed by the same hand; the first, by the post; the other, by a countryman; who having been informed of her absence, and of all the circumstances they could tell him of it, posted away, full of concern, saying, that the lady he was sent from would be ready to break her heart at the tidings.

I thought it right to take the two letters back with me; and dismissing my coach, took a chair, as a more proper vehicle for the lady, if I (the friend of her *destroyer*) could prevail upon her to leave Rowland's.

And here, being obliged to give way to an indispensable avocation, I will make thee taste a little, in thy turn, of the plague of suspense; and break off, without giving thee the least hint of the issue of my further proceedings. I know, that those least bear disappointment, who love most to give it. In twenty instances, hast thou afforded me proof of the truth of this observation. And I matter not thy raving.

Another letter, however, shall be ready; send for it as soon as thou wilt. But, were it not, have I not written enough to convince thee, that I am

Thy ready and obliging friend,

J. BELFORD.

LETTER LXVII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Monday, July 17, eleven at night.

CURSE upon thy hard heart, thou vile caitiff! How hast thou tortured me, by thy designed *abruption!* 'Tis impossible that Miss Harlowe should have ever suffered as thou hast made me suffer, and as I now suffer!

That sex is made to bear pain. It is a curse, that the first of it entailed upon all her daughters, when she brought the curse upon us all. And they love those best, whether man or child, who give them most—but to stretch upon thy d—'d tenter-hooks such a spirit as mine—no rack, no torture, can equal my torture!

And must I still wait the return of another messenger? Confound thee for a malicious devil! I wish thou wert a post-horse, and I upon the back of thee! How would I whip and spur, and harrow up thy clumsy sides, till I made thee a ready-roasted, ready-flayed, mess of dog's meat; all the hounds in the country howling after thee, as I drove thee, to wait my dismounting, in order to devour thee piecemeal; life still throbbing in each churned mouthful!

Give this fellow the sequel of thy tormenting scribble.

Dispatch him away with it. Thou hast promised it shall be ready. Every cushion or chair I shall sit upon, the bed I shall lie down upon, (if I go to bed) till he return, will be stuffed with bolt-upright awls, bodkins, corking-pins, and packing-needles: already I can fancy, that to pink my

body like my mind, I need only to be put into a hogshead stuck full of steel, pointed spikes, and rolled down a hill three times as high as the Monument.

But I lose time; yet know not how to employ it till this fellow returns with the sequel of thy soul-harrowing intelligence.

LETTER LXVIII.

MR. BELFORD TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Monday night, July 17.

On my return to Rowland's, I found that the apothecary was just gone up. Mrs. Rowland being above with him, I made the less scruple to go up too, as it was probable, that to ask for leave would be to ask to be denied; hoping also, that the letters I had with me would be a good excuse.

She was sitting on the side of the broken couch, extremely weak and low; and, I observed, cared not to speak to the man: and no wonder; for I never saw a more shocking fellow, of a profession tolerably genteel, nor heard a more illiterate one prate—physician in ordinary to this house, and others like it, I suppose! He put me in mind of Otway's apothecary in his Caius Marius; as borrowed from the immortal Shakspeare:

> Meagre and very rueful were his looks:
> Sharp misery had worn him to the bones.
> ———— famine in his cheeks:
> Need and oppression staring in his eyes:
> Contempt and beggary hanging on his back:
> The world no friend of his, nor the world's law.

As I am in black, he took me, at my entrance, I believe, to be a doctor: and slunk behind me with

his hat upon his two thumbs, and looked as if he expected the oracle to open, and give him orders.

The lady looked displeased, as well at me as at Rowland, who followed me, and at the apothecary. It was not, she said, the least of her present misfortunes, that she could not be left to her own sex; and to her option to see whom she pleased.

I besought her excuse: and winking for the apothecary to withdraw, [which he did] told her, that I had been at her new lodgings, to order every thing to be got ready for her reception, presuming she would choose to go thither: that I had a chair at the door: that Mr. Smith and his wife [I named their names, that she should not have room for the least fear of Sinclair's] had been full of apprehensions for her safety: that I had brought two letters, which were left there for her; the one by the post, the other that very morning.

This took her attention, she held out her charming hand for them; took them, and, pressing them to her lips—From the only friend I have in the world! said she, kissing them again; and looking at the seals, as if to see whether they had been opened. I can't read them, said she, my eyes are too dim; and put them into her bosom.

I besought her to think of quitting that wretched hole.

Whither could she go, she asked, to be safe and uninterrupted for the short remainder of her life; and to avoid being again visited by the creatures who had insulted her before?

I gave her the most solemn assurances, that she should not be invaded in her new lodgings by any body: and said, that I would particularly engage my honour, that *the person who had most offended her, should not come near her, without her own consent.*

Your honour, sir! Are you not that man's friend!

I am not a friend, madam, to his vile actions to the *most excellent of women.*

Do you flatter me, sir? Then are you a MAN.—But oh, sir, your friend, holding her face forward with great eagerness, your *barbarous* friend, what has he not to answer for!

There she stopt: her heart full; and putting her hand over her eyes and forehead, the tears trickled through her fingers: resenting thy barbarity, it seemed, as Cæsar did the stab from his distinguished Brutus!

Though she was so very much disordered, I thought I would not lose this opportunity to assert your innocence of this villanous arrest.

There is no defending the unhappy man in any of his vile actions by you, madam; but of this last outrage, by all that's good and sacred, he is innocent.

O wretches; what a sex is yours!—Have you all one dialect? *Good and sacred!*—If, sir, you can find an oath, or a vow, or an adjuration, that my ears have not been twenty times a day wounded with, then speak it, and I may again believe a MAN.

I was excessively touched at these words, knowing thy baseness, and the reason she had for them.

But say you, sir, for I would not methinks, have the wretch capable of this sordid baseness!—Say you, that he is innocent of this *last* wickedness? Can you *truly* say that he is.

By the great God of heaven!——

Nay, sir, if you swear, I must doubt you!—If you yourself think your WORD insufficient, what reliance can I have on your OATH!—O that this my experience had not cost me so dear! But were I to live a *thousand* years, I would always suspect the veracity of a swearer. Excuse me, sir;

but is it likely, that *he* who makes so free with his GOD, will scruple any thing that may serve his turn with his *fellow-creatures*?

This was a most affecting reprimand!

Madam, said I, I have a regard, a regard a gentleman *ought* to have, to my word; and whenever I forfeit it to you——

Nay, sir, don't be angry with me. It is grievous to me to question a gentleman's veracity. But your friend calls himself a *gentleman*—you know not what I have suffered by a *gentleman*!—And then again she wept.

I would give you, madam, demonstration, if your grief and your weakness would permit it, that he has no hand in this barbarous baseness: and that he resents it as it ought to be resented.

Well, well, sir, [with quickness] he will have his account to make up somewhere else; not to me. I should not be sorry to find him able to acquit his intention on this occasion. Let him know, sir, only one thing, that, when you heard me in the bitterness of my spirit, most vehemently exclaim against the undeserved usage I have met with from him that *even* then, in *that* passionate moment, I was able to say, [and never did I see such an earnest and affecting exaltation of hands and eyes] 'Give him, good God! repentance and amendment: that I may be the last poor creature, who shall be ruined by him!—and, in thine own good time, receive to *thy* mercy, the poor wretch who had *none* on me!—'

By my soul, I could not speak.—She had not her Bible before her for nothing.

I was forced to turn my head away, and to take out my handkerchief.

What an angel is this!—Even the gaoler, and his wife and maid, wept.

Again, I wish thou hadst been there, that thou mightest have sunk down at her feet, and begun that moment to reap the effect of her generous wishes for thee; undeserving, as thou art, of any thing but perdition!

I represented to her, that she would be less free where she was from visits she liked not, than at her own lodgings. I told her that it would probably bring her, in particular, *one visitor*, who otherwise I would engage [but I durst not swear again, after the severe reprimand she had just given me] should not come near her, without her consent. And I expressed my surprise, that she should be unwilling to quit such a place as this; when it would be more than probable, that some of her friends, when it was known how bad she was, would visit her.

She said, the place, when she was first brought into it, was indeed very shocking to her: but that she had found herself so weak and ill, and her griefs had so sunk her, that she did not expect to have lived till now: that therefore all places were alike to her: for to die in a prison, *was* to die, and equally eligible as to die in a palace [palaces, she said, could have no attractions for a dying person:] but, that since she feared she was not so soon to be released as she had hoped; since she was suffered to be so little mistress of herself *here;* and since she might, by removal, be in the way of her dear friend's letters; she would hope, that she might depend upon the assurances I gave her, of being at full liberty to return to her last lodgings (otherwise she would provide herself with new ones, out of my knowledge as well as out of yours:) and that I was too much of a gentleman, to be concerned in carrying her back to the house she had so much reason to abhor; and to which she had been once before most vilely betrayed to her ruin.

I assured her in the strongest terms [*but swore not*] that you were resolved not to molest her; and, as a proof of the sincerity of my professions, besought her to give me directions (in pursuance of my friend's express desire) about sending all her apparel, and whatever belonged to her, to her new lodgings.

She seemed pleased; and gave me instantly out of her pocket her keys; asking me, if Mrs. Smith, whom I had named, might not attend me: and she would give *her* further directions: to which I cheerfully assented: and then she told me, that she would accept the chair I had offered her.

I withdrew; and took the opportunity to be civil to Rowland and his maid; for she found no fault with their behaviour, for what they *were*; and the fellow seems to be miserably poor. I sent also for the apothecary, who is as poor as the officer (and still poorer, I dare say, as to the skill required in his business;) and satisfied him beyond his hopes.

The lady, after I had withdrawn, attempted to read the letters I had brought her. But she could read but a little way in one of them, and had great emotions upon it.

She told the woman she would take a speedy opportunity to acknowledge her civilities and her husband's, and to satisfy the apothecary; who might send her his bill to her lodgings.

She gave the maid something; probably the only half-guinea she had: and then with difficulty, her limbs trembling under her, and supported by Mrs. Rowland, got down stairs.

I offered my arm: she was pleased to lean upon it. I doubt, sir, said she, as she moved, I have behaved rudely to you: but, if you knew all, you would forgive me.

I know enough, madam, to convince me, that

there is not such purity and honour in any woman upon earth; nor any one that has been so barbarously treated.

She looked at me very earnestly. What she thought I cannot say; but, in general, I never saw so much soul in a woman's eyes as in hers.

I ordered my servant (whose mourning made him less observable as such, and who had not been in the lady's eye) to keep the chair in view; and to bring me word how she did when set down. The fellow had the thought to step into the shop, just before the chair entered it, under the pretence of buying snuff; and so enabled himself to give me an account, that she was received with great joy by the good woman of the house; who told her, she was but just come in: and was preparing to attend her in High Holborn.—O Mrs. Smith, said she, as soon as she saw her, did you not think I was run away?—You don't know what I have suffered since I saw you. I have been in a prison! —Arrested for debts I owe not!—But, thank God, I am here!—Will you permit your maid—I have forgot her name already——

Catharine, madam——

Will you let Catharine assist me to bed?—I have not had my clothes off since Thursday night.

What she further said the fellow heard not, she leaning upon the maid, and going up stairs.

But dost thou not observe, what a strange, what an uncommon openness of heart reigns in this lady? *She had been in a prison,* she said, before a stranger in the shop, and before the maid-servant: and so, probably, she would have said, had there been twenty people in the shop.

The disgrace she cannot hide from *herself,* as she says in a letter to Lady Betty, she is not solicitous to conceal from the *world!*

But this makes it evident to me, that *she* is resolved to keep no terms with thee. And yet to be able to put up such a prayer for thee, as she did in her prison; [I will often mention the *prison-room*, to tease thee!] does not this show, that revenge has very little sway in her mind; though she can retain so much proper resentment?

And this is another excellence in this admirable woman's character: for whom, before her, have we met with in the whole sex, or in ours either, that knew how, in *practice*, to distinguish between REVENGE and RESENTMENT, for base and ungrateful treatment?

"'Tis a cursed thing, after all, that such a woman as this should be treated as she has been treated. Hadst thou been a king, and done as thou hast done by such a meritorious innocent, I believe in my heart it would have been adjudged to be a national sin, and the sword, the pestilence, or famine must have atoned for it.—But as thou art a private man, thou wilt certainly meet with thy punishment (besides what thou mayest expect from the justice of thy country, and the vengeance of her friends) as she will her reward, HEREAFTER.

It must be so, if there be really such a thing as *future remuneration*; as now I am more and more convinced there must:—else, what a hard fate is hers, whose punishment, to all appearance, has so much exceeded her fault? And as to thine, how can *temporary* burnings, wert thou by some accident to be consumed in thy bed, expiate for all thy abominable vileness to her, in breach of all obligations moral and divine?

I was resolved to lose no time in having every thing which belonged to the lady at the cursed woman's sent her. Accordingly, I took coach to Smith's, and procured the lady, (to whom I sent up

my compliments, and inquiries how she bore her removal) ill as she sent me down word she was, to give proper directions to Mrs. Smith: whom I took with me to Sinclair's: and who saw every thing looked out, and put into the trunks and boxes they were first brought in; and carried away in two coaches.

Had I not been there, Sally and Polly would each of them have taken to herself something of the poor lady's spoils. This they declared: and I had some difficulty to get from Sally a fine Brussels-lace head, which she had the confidence to say she would wear for *Miss Harlowe's* sake. Nor should either I or Mrs. Smith have known she had got it, had she not been in search after the ruffles belonging to it.

My resentment on this occasion, and the conversation which Mrs Smith and I had, (in which I not only expatiated on the merits of the lady, but expressed my concern for her sufferings; though I left her room to suppose her married, yet without averring it) gave me high credit with the good woman: so that we are perfectly well acquainted already: by which means I shall be enabled to give you accounts from time to time of all that passes; and which I will be very industrious to do, provided I may depend upon the solemn promises I have given the lady, in your name, as well as in my own, that she shall be free from all personal molestation from you. And thus shall I have it in my power to return *in kind* your writing favours; and preserve my short-hand besides: which, till this correspondence was opened, I had pretty much neglected.

I ordered the abandoned women to make out your account. They answered, *that* they would do it with a *vengeance*. Indeed they breathe no-

thing but revenge. For now they say, you will assuredly marry; and your example will be followed by all your friends and companions—as the old one says, to the utter ruin of her poor house.

LETTER LXIX.

MR. BELFORD TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Tuesday morn. (July 18) 6 o'clock.

HAVING sat up late to finish and seal in readiness my letter to the above period, I am disturbed before I wished to have risen, by the arrival of thy second fellow, man and horse in a foam.

While he baits, I will write a few lines, most heartily to congratulate thee on thy *expected* rage and impatience, and on thy recovery of *mental* feeling.

How much does the idea thou givest me of thy deserved torments, by thy upright awls, bodkins, pins, and packing-needles, by thy rolling hogshead, with iron spikes, and by thy macerated sides, delight me!

I will, upon every occasion that offers, drive more spikes into thy hogshead, and roll thee down-hill, and up, as thou recoverest to sense, or rather returnest back to *senselessness*. Thou knowest therefore the terms on which thou art to enjoy my correspondence. Am not I, who have all along, and *in time*, protested against thy barbarous and ungrateful perfidies to a woman so noble, entitled to drive remorse, if possible, into thy hitherto callous heart?

Only let me repeat one thing, which perhaps I mentioned too slightly before. That the lady was determined to remove to new lodgings, where nei-

ther you nor I should be able to find her, had I not solemnly assured her, that she might depend upon being free from your visit.

These assurances I thought I might give her, not only because of your promise, but because it is necessary for you to know where she is, in order to address yourself to her by your friends.

Enable me therefore to make good to her this my solemn engagement; or adieu to all friendship, at least to all correspondence, with thee for ever.

J. BELFORD.

LETTER LXX.

MR. BELFORD TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Tuesday, July 18, afternoon.

I RENEWED my inquiries after the lady's health, in the morning, by my servant: and as soon as I had dined, I went myself.

I had but a poor account of it: yet sent up my compliments. She returned me thanks for all my good offices; and her excuses, that they could not be *personal* just then, being very low and faint: but if I gave myself the trouble of coming about six this evening, she should be able, she hoped, to drink a dish of tea with me, and would then thank me herself.

I am very proud of this condescension; and think it looks not amiss for you, as I am your avowed friend. Methinks I want fully to remove from her mind all doubts of you in this last villanous action: and who knows then what your noble relations may be able to do for you with her, if you hold your mind? For your servant acquainted me with their having actually engaged Miss Howe in their

and your favour, before this cursed affair happened. And I desire the particulars of all from yourself, that I may the better know how to serve you.

She has two handsome apartments, a bed-chamber and dining-room, with light closets in each. She has already a nurse (the people of the house having but one maid); a woman whose care, diligence, and honesty, Mrs. Smith highly commends. She has likewise the benefit of the voluntary attendance, and *love*, as it seems, of a widow gentlewoman, Mrs. Lovick her name, who lodges over her apartment, and of whom she seems very fond, having found something in her, she thinks, resembling the qualities of her worthy Mrs. Norton.

About seven o'clock this morning, it seems, the lady was so ill, that she yielded to their desires, to have an apothecary sent for—not the fellow, thou mayest believe, she had had before at Rowland's: but one Mr. Goddard, a man of skill and eminence; and of conscience too; demonstrated as well by general character, as by his prescriptions to this lady: for pronouncing her case to be grief, he ordered, for the present, only innocent juleps, by way of cordial; and, as soon as her stomach should be able to bear it, light kitchen-diet; telling Mrs. Lovick that, that, with air, moderate exercise, and cheerful company, would do her more good than all the medicines in his shop.

This has given me, as it seems it has the lady, (who also praises his modest behaviour, paternal looks, and genteel address) a very good opinion of the man; and I design to make myself acquainted with him, and, if he advises to call in a doctor, to wish him, for the fair patient's sake, more than the physician's, (who wants not practice) my worthy friend Dr. H.—whose character is above all excep-

tion, as his humanity, I am sure, will distinguish him to the lady.

Mrs. Lovick gratified me with an account of a letter she had written from the lady's mouth to Miss Howe; she being unable to write herself with steadiness.

It was to this effect; in answer, it seems, to her two letters, whatever were the contents of them:

'That she had been involved in a dreadful calamity, which she was sure, when known, would exempt her from the effects of her friendly displeasure, for not answering her first; having been put under an arrest—could she have believed it?—That she was released but the day before: and was now so weak and so low, that she was obliged to get a widow gentlewoman in the same house to account thus for her silence to her [Miss Howe's] two letters of the 13th and 16th: that she would, as soon as able, answer them—begged of her, mean time, not to be uneasy for her; since (only that this was a calamity which came upon her when she was far from being well; a load laid upon the shoulders of a poor wretch, ready before to sink under too heavy a burden) *it was nothing to the evil she had before suffered:* and one felicity seemed likely to issue from it; which was, that she would be at rest, in an honest house, with considerate and kind-hearted people; having assurance given her, that she should not be molested by the wretch, whom it would be death for her to see: so that now she [Miss Howe] needed not to send to her by private and expensive conveyances: nor need Collins to take precautions for fear of being dogged to her lodgings; nor need she write by a fictitious name to her, but by her own.'

You see I am in a way to oblige you: you see how much she depends upon my engaging for

your forbearing to intrude yourself into her company: let not your flaming impatience destroy all; and make me look like a villain to a lady who has reason to suspect *every man she sees* to be so.—Upon this condition, you may expect all the services that can flow from true friendship, and from

Your sincere well-wisher,

J. BELFORD.

LETTER LXXI.

MR. BELFORD TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Tuesday night, July 18.

I AM just come from the lady. I was admitted into the dining-room, where she was sitting in an elbow-chair, in a very weak and low way. She made an effort to stand up, when I entered; but was forced to keep her seat. You'll excuse me, Mr. Belford: I ought to rise to thank you for all your kindness to me. I was to blame to be so loth to leave that sad place: for I am in heaven here, to what I was there; and good people about me, too!—I have not had good people about me for a long, long time before; so that [with a half-smile] I had begun to wonder whither they were all gone.

Her nurse and Mrs. Smith, who were present, took occasion to retire: and, when we were alone, You seem to be a person of humanity, sir, said she: you hinted, as I was leaving *my prison,* that you were not a stranger to my sad story. If you know it *truly,* you must know that I have been most barbarously treated; and have not deserved it at the man's hands by whom I have suffered.

I told her, I knew enough to be convinced, that

she had the merit of a saint, and the purity of an angel: and was proceeding, when she said, No flighty compliments! No undue attributes, sir!

I offered to plead for my sincerity; and mentioned the word *politeness;* and would have distinguished between that and *flattery.* Nothing can be polite, said she, that is not just: whatever I *may* have had; I have *now* no vanity to gratify.

I disclaimed all intentions of compliment: all I *had* said, and what I *should* say, was, and should be, the effect of sincere veneration. My unhappy friend's account of her had entitled her to that.

I then mentioned your grief, your penitence, your resolutions of making her all the amends that were possible now to be made her: and in the most earnest manner, I asserted your innocence as to the last villanous outrage.

Her answer was to this effect—It is painful to me to think of him. The amends you talk of, cannot be made. This last violence you speak of, *is nothing to what preceded it.* That *cannot* be atoned for: nor palliated: this *may:* and I shall not be sorry to be convinced, that he cannot be guilty of so very low a wickedness.—Yet, after his vile forgeries of hands—after his baseness in imposing upon me the most infamous persons as ladies of honour of his own family—what are the iniquities he is not capable of?

I would then have given her an account of the trial you stood with your friends: your own previous resolutions of marriage, had she honoured you with the requested *four words:* all your family's earnestness to have the honour of her alliance: and the application of your two cousins to Miss Howe, by general consent, for that young lady's interest with her: but, having just touched upon these topics, she cut me short, saying, that was a cause be-

fore another tribunal: Miss Howe's letters to her were upon that subject; and she would write her thoughts to *her* as soon as she was able.

I then attempted more particularly to clear you of having any hand in the vile Sinclair's officious arrest; a point she had the generosity to *wish* you cleared of: and having mentioned the outrageous letter you had written to me on this occasion, she asked, if I had that letter about me?

I owned I had.

She wished to see it.

This puzzled me horribly: for you must needs think, that most of the free things, which, among us rakes, pass for wit and spirit, must be shocking stuff to the ears or eyes of persons of delicacy of that sex: and then such an air of levity runs through thy most serious letters; such a false bravery, endeavouring to carry off ludicrously the subjects that most affect thee; that those letters are generally the least fit to be seen, which ought to be most to thy credit.

Something like this I observed to her; and would fain have excused myself from showing it: but she was so earnest, that I undertook to read some parts of it, resolving to omit the most exceptionable.

I know thou'lt curse me for that: but I thought it better to oblige her than to be suspected myself; and so not have it in my power to serve thee with her, when so good a foundation was laid for it; and when she knows as bad of thee as I can tell her.

Thou rememberest the contents, I suppose, of thy furious letter*. Her remarks upon the different parts of it, which I read to her, were to the following effect:

Upon the two first lines, *all undone! undone, by*

* See letter lxii.

Jupiter!—zounds, Jack, what shall I do now! A curse upon all my plots and contrivances! thus she expressed herself:

'O how light, how unaffected with the sense of its own crimes, is the heart that could dictate to the pen this libertine froth!'

The paragraph which mentions the vile arrest, affected her a good deal.

In the next I omitted thy curse upon thy relations, whom thou wert gallanting: and read on the seven subsequent paragraphs down to thy execrable wish; which was too shocking to read to her. What I read produced the following reflections from her:

'The plots and contrivances which he curses, and the exultings of the wicked wretches on finding me out, show me, that all his guilt was premeditated: nor doubt I, that his dreadful perjuries, and inhuman arts, as he went along, were to pass for fine stratagems; for witty sport; and to demonstrate a superiority of inventive talents.—O my cruel, cruel brother! had it not been for thee, I had not been thrown upon so pernicious and so despicable a plotter!—But proceed, sir; pray proceed.'

At that part, *canst thou, O fatal prognosticator! tell me where my punishment will end?*—She sighed: and when I came to that sentence, *praying for my reformation, perhaps*—Is that there? said she, sighing again. Wretched man!—And shed a tear for thee.—By my faith, Lovelace, I believe she hates thee not! She has at least a concern, a generous concern for thy future happiness!—What a noble creature hast thou injured!

She made a very severe reflection upon me, on reading these words—*on your knees, for me, beg her pardon*—'You had all your lessons, sir, said she, when you came to redeem me—you was so condes-

cending as to kneel: I thought it was the effect of your own humanity, and good-natured earnestness to serve me—excuse me, sir, I knew not, that it was in consequence of a prescribed lesson.'

This concerned me not a little: I could not bear to be thought such a wretched puppet, such a Joseph Leman, such a Tomlinson—I endeavoured, therefore, with some warmth, to clear myself of this reflection; and she again asked my excuse: 'I was avowedly, she said, the friend of a man, whose friendship, she had reason to be sorry to say, was no credit to any body.'—And desired me to proceed.

I did; but fared not much better afterwards: for, on that passage where you say, *I had always been her friend and advocate,* this was her unanswerable remark; 'I find, sir, by this expression, that he had always designs against me; and that you all along *knew* that he had: would to heaven, you had had the goodness to have contrived some way, that might not have endangered your own safety, to give me notice of his baseness, since you approved not of it! But you gentlemen, I suppose, had rather see an innocent fellow-creature ruined, than be thought capable of an action, which, however generous, might be likely to loosen the bands of a wicked friendship!'

After this severe, but just reflection, I would have avoided reading the following, although I had unawares begun the sentence (but she held me to it): *what would I now give, had I permitted you to have been a successful advocate!* And this was her remark upon it—'So, sir, you see, if you had been the happy means of preventing the evils designed me, you would have had your friend's thanks for it, when he came to his consideration. This satisfaction, I am persuaded every one, in the long run,

will enjoy, who has the virtue to withstand, or prevent, a wicked purpose. I was obliged, *I see*, to your kind wishes—but it was a point of honour with you to keep his secret; the more indispensable with you, perhaps, the viler the secret. Yet permit me to wish, Mr. Belford, that you were capable of relishing the pleasures that arise to a benevolent mind from VIRTUOUS friendship!—None *other* is worthy of the sacred name. You seem an humane man: I hope for your own sake, you will one day experience the difference: and when you do, think of Miss Howe and Clarissa Harlowe, (I find you know much of my sad story) who were the happiest creatures on earth in each other's friendship till this friend of your's'—and there she stopt, and turned from me.

Where thou callest thyself *a villanous plotter*; 'to take crime to himself, said she, without shame, O what a hardened wretch is this man!'

On that passage, where thou sayest, *let me know how she has been treated: if roughly, woe be to the guilty!* this was her remark, with an air of indignation: 'What a man is your friend, sir!—Is such a one as *he* to set himself up to punish the guilty?—All the *rough* usage I could receive from them, was infinitely *less*'—and there she stopt a moment or two: then proceeding—'And who shall punish *him?* What an assuming wretch!—Nobody but *himself* is entitled to injure the innocent?—He is, I suppose, on earth, to act the part, which the malignant fiend is supposed to act below—dealing out punishments, at his pleasure, to every inferior instrument of mischief!'

What, thought I, have I been doing! I shall have this savage fellow think I have been playing him booty, in reading part of his letter to this sagacious lady!—yet, if thou art angry, it can only, in rea-

son, be at thyself; for who would think I might not communicate to her some of the least exceptionable parts of a letter (as a proof of thy sincerity in exculpating thyself from a criminal charge) which thou wrotest to thy friend, to convince *him* of thy innocence? But a bad heart, and a bad cause, are confounding things: and so let us put it to its proper account.

I passed over thy charge to me, to curse them by the hour; and thy names of *dragon* and *serpents*, though so applicable; since, had I read them, thou must have been supposed to know from the first, what creatures they were; vile fellow as thou wert, for bringing so much purity among them! And I closed with thy own concluding paragraph, *A line! A line! A kingdom for a line!* &c. However telling her (since she saw that I omitted some sentences) that there were further vehemences in it; but as they were better fitted to show to me the sincerity of the writer, than for so delicate an ear as hers to hear, I chose to pass them over.

You have read enough, said she—he is a wicked, wicked man!—I see he intended to have me in his power at any rate; and I have no doubt of what his purposes were, by what his actions have been. You know his vile Tomlinson, I suppose—you know—but what signifies talking?—Never was there such a premeditatedly false heart in man [*nothing can be truer, thought I!*] What has he not vowed! What has he not invented! And all for what?—Only, to ruin a poor young creature, whom he ought to have protected; and whom he had first deprived of all other protection?

She arose and turned from me, her handkerchief at her eyes: and, after a pause, came towards me again—'I hope, said she, I talk to a man who has a better heart: and I thank you, sir, for all your kind, though ineffectual pleas in my favour fo-

merly, whether the motives for them were compassion, or principle, or both. That they *were* ineffectual, might very probably be owing to your want of earnestness; and *that*, as *you* might think, to my want of merit. I might not, in your eye, *deserve* to be saved!—I might appear to you a giddy creature, who had run away from her true and natural friends; and who therefore ought to take the consequence of the lot she had drawn.'

I was afraid, for thy sake, to let her know how *very* earnest I had been: but assured her that I had been her zealous friend; and that my motives were founded upon a merit, that, I believed, was never equalled: that, however indefensible Mr. Lovelace was, he had always done justice to her virtue: that to a full conviction of her untainted honour it was owing, that he so earnestly desired to call so inestimable a jewel his—and was proceeding, when she again cut me short—

Enough, and too much of this subject, sir!—If he will never more let me behold his face, that is all I have now to ask of him.—Indeed, indeed, clasping her hands, *I never will*, if I can, by any means not criminally desperate, avoid it.

What could I say for thee?—There was no room, however, *at that time*, to touch this string again, for fear of bringing upon myself a prohibition, not only of the subject, but of ever attending her again.

I gave some distant intimations of money-matters. I should have told thee, that when I read to her that passage, where thou biddest me force what sums upon her I can get her to take—she repeated, No, no, no, no! several times with great quickness; and I durst no more than just intimate it again—and that so darkly, as left her room to seem not to understand me.

Indeed I know not the person, man or woman, I

should be so much afraid of disobliging, or incurring a censure from, as from her. She has so much true dignity in her manner, without pride or arrogance, (which in those who have either, one is tempted to mortify) such a piercing eye, yet softened so sweetly with rays of benignity, that she commands all one's reverence.

Methinks I have a kind of holy love for this angel of a woman; and it is matter of astonishment to me, that thou couldst converse with her a quarter of an hour together, and hold thy devilish purposes.

Guarded as she was by piety, prudence, virtue, dignity, family, fortune, and a purity of heart, that never woman before her boasted, what a real devil must he be (yet I doubt I shall make thee proud!) who could resolve to break through so many fences!

For my own part, I am more and more sensible, that I ought not to have contented myself with *representing against*, and *expostulating with thee upon*, thy base intentions: and indeed I had it in my head, more than once, to try to do something for her. But, wretch that I was! I was withheld by notions of false honour, as she justly reproached me, because of thy own *voluntary* communications to me of thy purposes: and then, as she was brought into such a cursed house, and was so watched by thyself, as well as by thy infernal agents, I thought (knowing my man!) that I should only accelerate the intended mischiefs.—Moreover, finding thee so much overawed by her virtue, that thou hadst not, at thy *first* carrying her thither, the courage to attempt her; and that she had, more than once, without knowing thy base views, obliged thee to abandon them, and to resolve to do her justice, and thyself honour; I hardly doubted, that her merit would be triumphant at last.

It is my opinion (if thou holdest thy purposes to marry) that thou canst not do better, than to procure thy *real* aunts, and thy *real* cousins, to pay her a visit, and to be thy advocates: but, if they decline personal visits, letters from them, and from my Lord M. supported by Miss Howe's interest, may, perhaps, effect something in thy favour.

But these are only my hopes, founded on what I *wish* for thy sake. The lady, I really think, would choose death rather than thee: and the two women are of opinion, though they know not half of what she has suffered, that her heart is actually broken.

At taking my leave, I tendered my best services to her, and besought her to permit me frequently to inquire after her health.

She made me no answer, but by bowing her head.

LETTER LXXII.

MR. BELFORD TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Wednesday, July 19.

This morning I took chair to Smith's; and, being told that the lady had a very bad night, but was up, I sent for her worthy apothecary; who, on his coming to me, approving of my proposal of calling in Dr. H.; I bid the women acquaint her with the designed visit.

It seems, she was at first displeased; yet withdrew her objection: but, after a pause, asked them, what she should do? She had effects of value, some of which she intended, as soon as she *could*, to turn into money, but, till then, had not a single guinea to give the doctor for his fee.

Mrs. Lovick said, she had five guineas by her; they were at her service.

She would accept of three, she said, if she would

take *that* (pulling a diamond ring from her finger) till she repaid her; but on no other terms.

Having been told I was below with Mr. Goddard, she desired to speak one word with me, before she saw the doctor.

She was sitting in an elbow-chair, leaning her head on a pillow; Mrs. Smith and the widow on each side her chair; her nurse, with a phial of hartshorn, behind her; in her own hand, her salts.

Raising her head at my entrance, she inquired, if the doctor knew Mr. Lovelace.

I told her, no; and that I believed you never saw him in your life.

Was the doctor my friend?

He was; and a very worthy and skilful man. I named him for his eminence in his profession: and Mr. Goddard said, he knew not a better physician.

I have but one condition to make before I see the gentleman; that he refuse not his fees from me. If I am poor sir, I am proud. I will not be under obligation, you may *believe*, sir, I will not. I suffer this visit, because I would not appear ungrateful to the few friends I have left, nor obstinate to such of my relations, as may some time hence, for their private satisfaction, inquire after my behaviour in my sick hours. So, sir, you know the condition. And don't let me be vexed. I am very ill! and cannot debate the matter.

Seeing her so determined, I told her, if it must be so, it should.

Then, sir, the gentleman may come. But I shall not be able to answer many questions. Nurse, you can tell him, at the window there, what a night I have had, and how I have been for two days past. And Mr. Goddard, if he be here, can let him know what I have taken. Pray let me be as little questioned, as possible.

The doctor paid his respects to her, with the gentlemanly address for which he is noted: and she cast up her sweet eyes to him, with that benignity which accompanies her every graceful look.

I would have retired; but she forbid it.

He took her hand, the lily not of so beautiful a white: Indeed, madam, you are very low, said he: but give me leave to say, that you can do more for yourself, than all the faculty can do for you.

He then withdrew to the window. And, after a short conference with the women, he turned to me, and to Mr. Goddard, at the other window: We can do nothing here, speaking low, but by cordials and nourishment. What friends has the lady? She seems to be a person of condition; and, ill as she is, a very fine woman.——A single lady, I presume?

I whisperingly told him she was. That there were extraordinary circumstances in her case; as I would have apprized him, had I met with him yesterday: that her friends were very cruel to her; but that she could not hear them named without reproaching herself; though they were much more to blame than she.

I knew I was right, said the doctor. A love-case, Mr. Goddard! A love-case, Mr. Belford! There is one person in the world, who can do her more service than all the faculty.

Mr. Goddard said, he had apprehended her disorder was in her mind; and had treated her accordingly: and then told the doctor what he had done: which he approving of, again taking her charming hand, said, My good young lady, you will require very little of our assistance. You must, in a great measure, be your own doctress. Come, *dear* madam, [forgive me the familiar tenderness: your

aspect commands love, as well as reverence; and a father of children, some of them older than yourself, may be excused for his familiar address] cheer up your spirits. Resolve to do all in your power to be well; and you'll soon grow better.

You are very kind, sir, said she. I will take whatever you direct. My spirits have been hurried. I shall be better, I believe, before I am worse. The care of my good friends here, looking at the women, shall not meet with an ungrateful return.

The doctor wrote. He would fain have declined his fee. As her malady, he said, was rather to be relieved by the soothings of a friend, than by the prescriptions of a physician, he should think himself greatly honoured to be admitted rather to *advise* her in the *one* character, than to *prescribe* to her in the *other*.

She answered, that she should be always glad to see so humane a man: that his visits would *keep her in charity with his sex*: but that, were she to *forget*, that he was her *physician*, she might be apt to abate of the confidence in his skill, which might be necessary to effect the amendment that was the end of his visits.

And when he urged her still further, which he did in a very polite manner, and as passing by the door two or three times a day, she said, she should always have pleasure in considering him in the kind light he *offered himself to her*: that *that* might be very generous in one person to offer, which would be as ungenerous in another to accept: that indeed she was not at present high in circumstance; and he saw by the tender (which he *must* accept of) that she had greater respect to *her own convenience*, than to *his merit*, or than to the *pleasure* she should take in his visits.

We all withdrew together, and the doctor and

Mr. Goddard having a great curiosity to know something more of her story, at the motion of the latter we went into a neighbouring coffee-house, and I gave them, in confidence, a brief relation of it; making all as light for you as I could; and yet you'll suppose, that, in order to do but common justice to the lady's character, heavy must be that light.

Three o'clock, afternoon.

I JUST now called again at Smith's; and am told she is somewhat better; which she attributed to the soothings of her doctor. She expressed herself highly pleased with both gentlemen; and said, that their behaviour to her was perfectly *paternal*.—

Paternal, poor lady!—Never having been, till very lately, from under her parents' wings, and now abandoned by all her friends, she is for finding out something *paternal* and *maternal* in every one, (the latter qualities in Mrs. Lovick and Mrs. Smith) to supply to herself the father and mother her dutiful heart pants after.

Mrs. Smith told me, that, after we were gone, she gave the keys of her trunk and drawers to her and the widow Lovick, and desired them to take an inventory of the contents of them; which they did, in her presence.

They also informed me, that she had requested them to find her a purchaser, for two rich dressed suits; one never worn, the other not above once or twice.

This shocked me exceedingly—*perhaps it may thee a little!!!*—Her reason for so doing, she told them, was, that she should never live to wear them: that her sister, and other relations, were above wearing them: that her mother would not endure in her sight any thing that was hers: that she

wanted the money: that she would not be obliged to any body, when she had effects by her for which she had no occasion: and yet, said she, I expect not that they will fetch a price answerable to their value.

They were both very much concerned, as they owned; and asked my advice upon it: and the richness of her apparel having given them a still higher notion of her rank than they had before, they supposed she must be of quality; and again wanted to know her story.

I told them, that she was indeed a woman of family and fortune: I still gave them room to suppose her married: but left it to her to tell them all in her own time and manner: all I would say, was, that she had been very vilely treated; deserved it not; and was all innocence and purity.

You may suppose, that they both expressed their astonishment, that there could be a man in the world, who could ill treat so fine a creature.

As to disposing of the two suits of apparel, I told Mrs. Smith, that she should pretend, that, upon inquiry, she had found a friend who would purchase the richest of them; but *(that she might not mistrust)* would stand upon a good bargain. And having twenty guineas about me, I left them with her, in part of payment; and bid her *pretend* to get her to part with it for as little more as she could induce her to take.

I am setting out for Edgware with poor Belton—more of whom in my next. I shall return to-morrow; and leave this in readiness for your messenger, if he call in my absence.

Adieu.

LETTER LXXIII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

[*In answer to letter* lxxi.]

M. Hall, Wedn. night, July 19.

You might well apprehend, that I should think you were playing me booty in communicating my letter to the lady.

You ask, who would think you might not read to her the least exceptionable parts of a letter written in my own defence?—*I'll tell you who*—the man, who in the same letter that he asks this question, tells the friend whom he exposes to her resentment, 'That there is such an air of levity runs through his most serious letters, that those of his are *least fit to be seen*, which ought to be *most to his credit*:' and now what thinkest thou of thyself-condemned folly? Be, however, I charge thee, more circumspect for the future, that so this clumsy error may stand singly by itself.

'It is painful to her to think of me!'—'Libertine froth!'—'So pernicious and so despicable a plotter!'—'A man whose friendship is no credit to any body!'—'Hardened wretch!'—'The devil's counterpart!'—'A wicked, wicked man!'—But *did* she, *could* she, *dared* she, to say, or *imply* all this?—And say it to a man whom she praises for humanity, and prefers to myself for that virtue; when all the humanity *he* shows, and *she knows it too*, is by *my* direction—so robs me of the credit of my own works; admirably entitled, all this shows her, to thy refinement upon the words *resentment* and *revenge*. But thou wert always aiming and blundering at something thou never couldst make out.

The praise thou givest to her *ingenuousness*, is another of thy peculiars. I think not as *thou* dost, of her tell-tale recapitulations and exclamations:—what end can they answer?—Only that thou hast an *holy* love for her, [the devil fetch thee for thy oddity!] or it is extremely provoking to suppose one sees such a charming creature stand upright before a libertine, and talk of the sin against her, that cannot be forgiven!—I wish at my heart, that these chaste ladies would have a little modesty in their anger!—It would sound very strange, if I Robert Lovelace should pretend to have more true delicacy, in a point that requires the utmost, than Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

I think I will put it into the head of her nurse Norton, and her Miss Howe, by some one of my agents, to chide the dear novice for her proclamations.

But to be serious: let me tell thee, that, severe as she is, and saucy, in asking so contemptuously, "what a man is your friend, sir, to set himself to punish guilty people!" I will never forgive the cursed woman, who could commit this last horrid violence on so excellent a creature.

The barbarous insults of the two nymphs, in their visits to her; the choice of the most execrable den that could be found out, in order, no doubt, to induce her to go back to theirs; and the still more execrable attempt, to propose to her a man who would pay the debt; a snare, I make no question, laid for her despairing and resenting heart by that devilish Sally, (thinking her, no doubt, a *woman)* in order to ruin her with me, and to provoke me, in a fury, to give her up to their remorseless cruelty; are outrages, that, to express myself in her style, I never *can*, never *will*, forgive.

But as to thy opinion, and the two women's at Smith's, that her heart is broken; that is the true women's language: I wonder how *thou* camest into it: thou who hast seen and heard of so many *female deaths* and *revivals.*

I'll tell thee what makes *against* this notion of theirs.

Her time of life, and charming constitution: the good she ever delighted to do, and fancied she was born to do; and which she may still continue to do, to as high a degree as ever; nay, higher: since I am no sordid varlet, thou knowest: her religious turn: a turn that will always teach her to bear *inevitable* evils with patience: the contemplation upon her last noble triumph over me, and over the whole crew; and upon her succeeding escape from us all: her will unviolated: and the inward pride of having *not deserved* the treatment she has met with.

How is it possible to imagine, that a woman, who has all these *consolations* to reflect upon, will die of a broken heart?

On the contrary, I make no doubt, but that, as she recovers from the dejection into which this last scurvy villany (which none but wretches of her own sex *could* have been guilty of) has thrown her, returning love will re-enter her *time-pacified* mind: her thoughts will then turn once more on the *conjugal pivot:* of course she will have livelier notions in her head; and these will make her perform all her circum-volutions with ease and pleasure; though not with so high a degree of either, as if the dear proud rogue could have exalted herself above the rest of her sex, as she turned round.

Thou askest, on reciting the bitter invectives that

the lady made against thy poor friend, (standing before her, I suppose, with thy fingers in thy mouth) *what couldst thou say* FOR *me?*

Have I not, in my former letters, suggested an hundred things, which a friend *in earnest* to vindicate or excuse a friend, might say, on such an occasion?

But now to current topics, and the present state of matters here.—It is true, as my servant told thee, that Miss Howe had engaged, before this cursed woman's officiousness, to use her interest with her friend in my behalf: and yet she told my cousins, in the visit they made her, that it was her opinion, that she would never forgive me. I send to thee inclosed copies of all that passed on this occasion between my cousins Montague, Miss Howe, myself, Lady Betty, Lady Sarah, and Lord M.

I long to know what Miss Howe wrote to her friend, in order to induce her to marry the *despicable plotter;* the *man whose friendship is no credit to any body;* the *wicked, wicked man.* Thou hadst the two letters in thy hand. Had they been in mine, the seal would have yielded to the touch of my warm finger, [perhaps without the help of the post-office bullet] and the folds, *as other plications have done,* opened of themselves to oblige my curiosity. A wicked omission, Jack, not to contrive to send them down to me, by man and horse! It might have passed, that the messenger who brought the second letter, took them both back. I could have returned them by another, when copied, as from Miss Howe, and nobody but myself and thee the wiser.

That's a charming girl! Her spirit, her delightful spirit!—Not to be married to it—how I wish to

get that lively bird into my cage! How would I make her flutter and fly about!—Till she left a feather upon every wire!

Had I begun there, I am confident, as I have heretofore said*, that I should not have had half the difficulty with her, as I have had with her charming friend. For these passionate girls have high pulses, and a clever fellow may make what sport he pleases with their *unevennesses*—now too high, now too low, you need only to provoke and appease them by turns; to bear with them, and forbear; to tease and ask pardon; and sometimes to give yourself the merit of a sufferer from them; then catching them in the moment of concession, conscious of their ill usage of you, they are all your own.

But these sedate contemplative girls, never out of temper but with reason; when that reason is given them, hardly ever pardon, or afford you another opportunity to offend.

It was in part the apprehension that this would be so with my dear Miss Harlowe, that made me carry her to a place where I believed she would be unable to escape me, although I were *not* to succeed in my first attempts. Else widow Sorlings's would have been as well for me, as widow Sinclair's. For early I saw, that there was no credulity in her to graft upon: no pretending to whine myself into her confidence. She was proof against amorous persuasion. She had *reason* in her love. Her penetration and good sense made her hate all compliments that had not truth and nature in them. What could I have done with her in any other place? And yet how long, even *there*, was I kept in awe, in spite of *natural incitement* and *un-*

* See Vol. V. p. 275.

natural instigations (as I now think them) by the mere force of that native dignity, and obvious purity of mind and manners, which fill every one with reverence, if not with *holy-love,* as thou callest it *, the moment he sees her!—Else thinkest thou not, it was easy for me to be a *fine gentleman,* and a *delicate lover*, or, at least, a *specious* and flattering one?

Lady Sarah and Lady Betty, finding the treaty upon the success of which they have set their foolish hearts, likely to run into length, are about departing to their own seats; having taken from me the best security the nature of the case will admit of, that is to say, *my word,* to marry the lady, if she will have me.

And after all (methinks thou askest) art thou still resolved to repair, if reparation be put into thy power?

Why, Jack, I must needs own, that my heart has now and then some retrograde motions, upon thinking seriously of the irrevocable ceremony. We do not easily give up the desire of our hearts, and what we imagine essential to our happiness, let the expectation or hope of compassing it be ever so unreasonable or absurd in the opinion of others. *Recurrings* there will be; hankerings, that will, on every but remotely favourable incident (however before discouraged and beaten back by ill success) pop up, and abate the satisfaction we should otherwise take in *contrariant* overtures.

'Tis ungentlemanly, Jack, *man* to *man*, to lie.—But matrimony I do not *heartily* love—although with a CLARISSA; yet I am in earnest to marry her.

But I am often thinking, that if now this dear creature, suffering time and my penitence, my re-

* See p. 326.

lation's prayers, and Miss Howe's mediation, to soften her *resentments* [her *revenge* thou hast prettily* distinguished away] and to recal repulsed inclination, should consent to meet me at the altar —how vain will she then make all thy eloquent periods of execration!—How many charming interjections of her own will she spoil! And what a couple of old patriarchs shall we become, going on in the mill-horse round; getting sons and daughters; providing nurses for them first, governors and governesses next; teaching them lessons their father never practised, nor which their mother, as her parents will say, was much the better for! And at last perhaps, when life shall be turned into the dully sober stillness, and I become desirous to forget all my past rogueries, what comfortable reflections will it afford, to find them all revived, with *equal*, or probably *greater* trouble and expense, in the persons and manners of so many young Lovelaces of the boys: and to have the girls run away with varlets perhaps not half so ingenious as myself: clumsy fellows, as it might happen, who could not afford the baggages one excuse for their weakness, besides those disgraceful ones of *sex* and *nature!*—O Belford! who can bear to think of these things!———Who, at my time of life especially, and with such a bias for mischief!

Of this I am absolutely convinced, that if a man ever intends to marry, and to enjoy in peace his own reflections; and not be afraid of retribution, or of the consequences of his own example; he should never be a rake.

This looks like conscience; don't it, Belford?

But, being in earnest still, as I have said, all I

* See p. 312.

have to do in my present uncertainty, is, to brighten up my faculties, by filing off the rust they have contracted by the town smoke, a long imprisonment in my close attendance to so little purpose on my fair perverse; and to brace up, if I can, the relaxed fibres of my mind, which have been twitched and convulsed like the nerves of some tottering paralytic, by means of the tumults she has excited in it; that so I may be able to present to her a husband as worthy as I can be of her acceptance; or, if she reject me, be in a capacity to resume my usual gaiety of heart, and show others of the misleading sex, that I am not discouraged by the difficulties I have met with from this sweet individual of it, from endeavouring to make myself as acceptable to them as before.

In this latter case, one tour to France and Italy, I dare say, will do the business. Miss Harlowe will by that time have forgotten all she has suffered from her ungrateful Lovelace: though it will be impossible that her Lovelace should ever forget a woman, whose equal he despairs to meet with, were he to travel from one end of the world to the other.

If thou continuest paying off the heavy debts my long letters, for so many weeks together, have made thee groan under, I will endeavour to restrain myself in the desires I have (importunate as they are) of going to town, to throw myself at the feet of my soul's beloved. *Policy* and *honesty* both join to strengthen the restraint my *own promise*, and *thy engagement*, have laid me under on this head. I would not afresh provoke; on the contrary, would give time for her resentments to subside, that so all that follows may be her own act and deed.

* * *

Hickman [I have a mortal aversion to that fellow!] has, by a line which I have just now received, requested an interview with me on Friday at Mr. Dormer's, as at a *common friend's*. Does the business he wants to meet me upon require that it should be at a *common friend's*?—A challenge implied: is it not Belford?—I shall not be civil to him, I doubt. He has been an intermeddler!—Then I envy him on Miss Howe's account: for if I have a right notion of this Hickman, it is impossible that that virago can ever love him.

Every one knows that the mother (saucy as the daughter sometimes is) crams him down her throat. Her mother is one of the most violent-spirited women in *England*. Her late husband could not stand in the matrimonial contention of *Who should?* but tipt off the perch in it, neither knowing how to yield, nor how to conquer.

A charming encouragement for a man of intrigue, when he has reason to believe, that the woman he has a view upon has no love for her husband! What good principles must that wife have, who is kept in against temptation by a sense of her duty, and plighted faith, where affection has no hold of her!

Pry'thee let's know, very particularly, how it fares with poor Belton.—'Tis an honest fellow.—Something more than his Thomasine seems to stick with him.

Thou hast not been preaching to him conscience and reformation, hast thou?—Thou shouldest not take liberties with him of this sort, unless thou thoughtest him absolutely irrecoverable. A man in ill health, and crop-sick, cannot play with these solemn things, as thou canst, and be neither better nor worse for them.—Repentance, Jack, I have a notion, should be set about while a man is in health and spirits. What's a man fit for [not to begin a

new work surely!] when he is not himself, nor master of his faculties?—Hence, as I apprehend, it is, that a death-bed repentance is supposed to be such a precarious and ineffectual thing.

As to myself, I hope I have a great deal of time before me; since I intend *one day* to be a reformed man. I have very serious reflections now and then. Yet am I half afraid of the truth of what my charmer once told me, that *a man cannot repent when he will.*—Not to hold it, I suppose she meant! By fits and starts I have repented a thousand times.

Casting my eye over the two preceding paragraphs, I fancy there is something like contradiction in them. But I will not reconsider them. The subject is a very serious one. I don't at present quite understand it. But now for one more airy.

Tourville, Mowbray, and myself, pass away our time as pleasantly as we possibly can without thee. I wish we don't add to Lord M.'s gouty days by the joy we give him.

This is one advantage, as I believe I have elsewhere observed, that we male-delinquents in love-matters have of the other sex:—for while they, poor things! sit sighing in holes and corners, or run to woods and groves to bemoan themselves on their baffled hopes, we can rant and roar, hunt and hawk; and, by new loves, banish from our hearts all remembrance of the old ones.

Merrily, however, as we pass our time, my reflections upon the injuries done to this noble creature bring a qualm upon my heart very often. But I know she will permit me to make her amends, after she has plagued me heartily, and that's my consolation.

An honest fellow still—clap thy wings, and crow, Jack!——

LETTER LXXIV.

MISS HOWE TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Thursday morn. July 20.

WHAT, my dearest creature, have been your sufferings!—What must have been your anguish on so disgraceful an insult, committed in the open streets, and in the broad day!

No end, I think, of the undeserved calamities of a dear soul, who has been so unhappily driven and betrayed into the hands of a vile libertine!—How was I shocked at the receiving of your letter written by another hand, and only dictated by you!—You must be very ill. Nor is it to be wondered at. But I hope it is rather from hurry, and surprise, and lowness, which *may* be overcome, than from a grief given way to, which may be attended with effects I cannot bear to think of.

But whatever you do, my dear, you must not despond! Indeed you must not despond! Hitherto you have been in no fault: but despair would be all your own: and the worst fault you can be guilty of.

I cannot bear to look upon another hand instead of yours. My dear creature, send me a few lines, though *ever so few*, in your own hand, if posssible.—For they will revive my heart; especially if they can acquaint me of your amended health.

I expect your answer to my letter of the 13th. We all expect it with impatience.

His relations are persons of *so much* honour—they are so *very* earnest to rank you among them—the wretch is so very penitent: *every one* of *his* family says he is—*your own* are so implacable—

your last distress, though the consequence of his former villany, yet neither brought on by his direction nor with his knowledge; and so much resented by him—that my mother is absolutely of opinion, that *you should be his*—especially, if yielding to my wishes as expressed in my letter, and those of all his friends, you *would* have complied had it not been for this horrid arrest.

I will enclose the copy of the letter I wrote to Miss Montague last Tuesday on hearing that nobody knew what was become of you; and the answer to it, under-written and signed by Lord M. Lady Sarah Sadleir, and Lady Betty Lawrance, as well as by the young ladies; and also by the wretch himself.

I own, that I like not the turn of what he has written to me; and before I will further interest myself in his favour, I have determined to inform myself *by a friend*, from his own mouth, of his sincerity, and whether his *whole inclination* be in his request to me, exclusive of the *wishes of his relations*. Yet my heart rises against him, on the supposition that there is the shadow of a reason for such a question, the woman Miss Clarissa Harlowe. But I think with my mother that marriage is now the only means left to make your future life tolerably easy—*happy* there is no saying.—His disgraces, in *that* case, in the eye of the world itself, will be more than yours: and to those who know you, glorious will be your triumph.

I am obliged to accompany my mother soon to the Isle of Wight. My aunt Harman is in a declining way, and insists upon seeing us both—and Mr. Hickman too I think.

His sister, of whom we have heard so much, with her lord, were brought t'other day to visit us. She strangely likes me, or says she does.

I can't say, but that I think she answers the excellent character we have heard of her.

It would be death to me to set out for the little island, and not see you first: and yet my mother (fond of exerting an authority that she herself, by that exertion often brings into question) insists, that my next visit to you, *must* be a congratulatory one, as Mrs. Lovelace.

When I know what will be the result of the questions to be put in my name to that wretch, and what is your mind on my letter of the 13th, I shall tell you more of mine.

The bearer promises to make so much dispatch, as to attend you this very afternoon. May he return with good tidings to

Your ever affectionate,

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER LXXV.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Thursday afternoon.

You pain me, my dearest Miss Howe, by the ardour of your noble friendship. I will be very brief, because I am not well; yet a good deal better than I was; and because I am preparing an answer to yours of the 13th. But, before hand, I must tell you, my dear, I will *not* have that man—don't be angry with me.—But indeed I won't. So let him be asked no questions about me, I beseech you.

I do *not* despond, my dear. I hope I may say *I will not* despond. Is not my condition greatly mended? I thank heaven it is!

I am no prisoner now in a vile house. I am not now in the power of that man's devices. I am not now obliged to hide myself in corners for fear of him. One of his intimate companions is become my warm friend, and engages to keep him from me, and that by his own consent. I am among honest people. I have all my clothes and effects restored to me. The wretch himself bears testimony to my honour.

Indeed I am very weak and ill: but I have an excellent physician, Dr. H. and as worthy an apothecary, Mr. Goddard—their treatment of me, my dear, is perfectly *paternal!*—My mind too, I can find, begins to strengthen: and methinks, at times, I find myself superior to my calamities.

I shall have sinkings sometimes. I must expect such. And my father's maledict—But you will chide me for introducing that, now I am enumerating my comforts.

But I charge you, my dear, that you do not suffer my calamities to sit too heavy upon your own mind. If you do, that will be to new-point some of those arrows that have been blunted, and lost their sharpness.

If you would contribute to *my* happiness, give way, my dear, to *your own;* and to the cheerful prospects before you!

You will think very meanly of your Clarissa, if you do not believe, that the greatest pleasure she can receive in this life, is in your prosperity and welfare. Think not of me, my only friend, but as we were in times past: and suppose me gone a great, great way off;—a long journey!—How often are the dearest of friends, at their country's call, thus parted—with a *certainty* for years—with a *probability* for ever!

Love me still, however. But let it be with a

weaning love. I am not what I was, when we were *inseparable* lovers, as I may say—our *views* must now be different.—Resolve, my dear, to make a worthy man happy, because a worthy man must make *you* so.—And so, my dearest love, for the present adieu!—Adieu, my dearest love;—but I shall soon write again, I hope!

LETTER LXXVI.

MR. BELFORD TO ROBERT LOVELACE ESQ.

[*In answer to Letter* lxxiii.]

Thursday, July 20.

I READ that part of your conclusion to poor Belton, where you inquire after him, and mention how merrily you, and the rest, pass your time at M. Hall. He fetched a deep sigh: *You are all very happy!* were his words.—I am sorry they *were* his words; for, poor follow, he is going very fast. Change of air, *he* hopes, will mend him, joined to the cheerful company I have left him in. But nothing, I dare say, will.

A consuming malady, and a consuming mistress, to an indulgent keeper, are dreadful things to struggle with both together: violence must be used to get rid of the latter; and yet he has not spirit left him to exert himself. His house is Thomasine's house; not his. He has not been within his doors for a fortnight past. *Vagabonding about* from inn to inn: entering each for a bait only; and staying two or three days without power to remove; and hardly knowing which to go to next. His malady is *within him;* and he cannot run away from it.

Her boys (once he thought them his) are sturdy enough to shoulder him in his own house as they pass by him. Siding with the mother, they in a manner expel him; and in his absence riot away on the remnant of his broken fortunes. As to their mother (who was once so tender, so submissive, so studious to oblige, that we all pronounced him happy, and his course of life the eligible) she is now so termagant, so insolent, that he cannot contend with her, without doing infinite prejudice to his health. A broken spirited defensive, *hardly a defensive,* therefore reduced to: and this to a heart, for so many years waging *offensive* war (not valuing whom the opponent), what a reduction! Now comparing himself to the superannuated lion in the fable, kicked in the jaws, and laid sprawling, by the spurning heel of an ignoble ass.

I have undertaken his cause. He has given me leave, yet not without reluctance, to put him into possession of his own house; and to place in it for him his unhappy sister, whom he has hitherto slighted *because* unhappy. It is hard, he told me, (and wept, poor fellow, when he said it) that he cannot be permitted to die quietly in his own house!—The fruits of blessed keeping these!——

Though but lately apprized of her infidelity, it now comes out to have been of so long continuance, that he has no room to believe the boys to be his: yet how fond did he use to be of them!

To what, Lovelace, shall we attribute the tenderness which a *reputed* father frequently shows to the children of another man?—What is that, I pray thee, which we call *nature,* and *natural affection?* And what has man to boast of as to sagacity and penetration, when he is as easily brought to cover and rear, and even to love, and often to prefer, the product of another's guilt with his wife or mis-

tress, as a hen or a goose, the eggs, and even *young*, of others of their kind?

Nay, let me ask, if *instinct*, as it is called, in the animal creation, does not enable them to distinguish their own, much more easily than we, with our boasted *reason* and sagacity, in this nice particular, can do?

If some men who have wives but of doubtful virtue, considered this matter duly, I believe their inordinate ardour after gain would be a good deal cooled, when they could not be certain (though their *mates* could) for whose children they were elbowing, bustling, griping, and perhaps cheating, those with whom they have concerns, whether friends, neighbours, or *more* certain next-of-kin, by the mother's side however.

But I will not push this notion so far as it might be carried; because if propagated, it might be of *unsocial* or *unnatural* consequence: since women of virtue would perhaps be more liable to suffer by the mistrusts and caprices of *bad-hearted* and *foolish-headed* husbands, than those who can screen themselves from detection by arts and hypocrisy, to which a woman of virtue cannot have recourse. And yet, were this notion duly and generally considered, it might be attended with no bad effects; as good education, good inclinations, and established virtue, would be the principally sought-after qualities; and not money, when a man (not biassed by mere personal attractions) was looking round him for a partner in his fortunes, and for a mother of his future children, which are to be the heirs of his possessions, and to enjoy the fruits of his industry.

But to return to poor Belton.

If I have occasion for your assistance, and that of our compeers, in re-instating the poor fellow, I

will give you notice. Meantime, I have just now been told, that Thomasine declares she will not stir; for, it seems, she suspects that measures will be fallen upon to make her quit. She is Mrs. Belton, she says, and will prove her marriage.

If she give herself these airs in his lifetime, what would she attempt to do after his death?

Her boys threaten any body, who shall presume to insult their *mother*. Their *father* (as they *call* poor Belton) they speak of as an unnatural one. And their probably *true father*, is for ever there, *hostilely* there, passing for her cousin, as usual; now her *protecting cousin*.

Hardly ever, I dare say, was there a keeper, that did not make a keeperess; who lavished away on her kept-fellow, what she obtained from the extravagant folly of him who kept her.

I will do without you if I can. The case will be only, as I conceive, like that of the ancient Sarmatians, returning, after many years absence, to their homes, their wives then in possession of their slaves. So that they had to contend not only with those *wives*, conscious of their infidelity, and with their *slaves*, but with the *children* of those slaves, grown up to manhood, resolute to defend their mothers and their long-manumitted fathers. But the noble Sarmatians, scorning to attack their slaves with equal weapons, only provided themselves with the same sort of whips with which they used formerly to chastise them. And attacking them with them, the miscreants fled before them.—In memory of which, to this day, the device on the coin in Novogrod, in Russia, a city of the ancient Sarmatia, is a man on horseback with a whip in his hand.

The poor fellow takes it ill, that you did not press him more than you did, to be of your party

at M. Hall. It is owing to Mowbray, he is sure, that he had so very slight an invitation, from one whose invitations used to be so warm.

Mowbray's speech to him, he says, he never will forgive: "Why, Tom," said the brutal fellow, with a curse, "thou droopest like a pip or roup-cloaking chicken. Thou shouldst grow perter, or submit to a solitary quarantine, if thou wouldst not infect the whole brood."

For my own part, only that this poor fellow is in distress, as well in his affairs, as in his mind, or I should be sick of you all. Such is the relish I have of the conversation, and such my admiration of the deportment and sentiments of this divine lady, that I would forego a month even of thy company, to be admitted into her's but for one hour: and I am highly in conceit with myself, greatly as I used to value *thine*, for being able, spontaneously as I may say, to make this preference.

It is, after all, a devilish life we have lived. And to consider how it all ends in a very few years—to see to what a state of ill health this poor fellow is so soon reduced—and then to observe how every one of ye run away from the unhappy being, as rats from a falling house, is fine comfort to help a man to look back upon companions ill-chosen, and a life mis-spent.

It will be your turns by and by, every man of ye, if the justice of your country interpose not.

Thou art the only rake we have herded with, if thou wilt not except myself, who hast preserved entire thy health and thy fortunes.

Mowbray indeed is indebted to a robust constitution, that he has not yet suffered in his health; but his estate is dwindling away year by year.

Three-fourths of Tourville's very considerable

fortunes are already dissipated; and the remaining fourth will probably soon go after the other three.

Poor Belton! we see how it is with him!—His only felicity is, that he will hardly *live* to want.

Thou art too proud, and too prudent, ever to be destitute; and, to do thee justice, hast a spirit to assist such of thy friends as may be reduced; and *wilt*, if thou shouldest then be living. But I think thou must, much sooner than thou imaginest, be called to thy account—knocked on the head perhaps by the friends of those whom thou hast injured; for if thou escapest this fate from the Harlowe family, thou wilt go on tempting danger and vengeance, till thou meetest with vengeance; and this, whether thou marriest or not: for the nuptial life will not, I doubt, till age join with it, cure thee of that spirit for intrigue, which is continually running away with thee, in spite of thy better sense, and transitory resolutions.

Well, then, I will suppose *thee* laid down quietly among thy worthier ancestors.

And now let me look forward to the ends of Tourville and Mowbray, [Belton will be crumbled into dust before thee perhaps] supposing thy early exit has saved them from gallows intervention.

Reduced, probably, by riotous waste to consequential want, behold them refuged in some obscene hole or garret; obliged to the careless care of some dirty old woman, whom nothing but her poverty prevails upon to attend to perform the last offices for men, who have made such shocking ravage among the young ones.

Then how miserably will they whine through squeaking organs; their big voices turned into puling pity-begging lamentations! Their now offensive paws, how helpless then!—Their now erect

necks then denying support to their aching heads; those globes of mischief dropping upon their quaking shoulders. Then what wry faces will they make! their hearts and their heads reproaching each other!—Distended their parched mouths!—Sunk their unmuscled cheeks!—Dropt their under jaws!—Each grunting like the swine he had resembled in his life! Oh! what a vile wretch have I been! Oh! that I had my life to come over again!—Confessing to the poor old woman, who cannot shrive them! Imaginary ghosts of deflowered virgins, and polluted matrons, flitting before their glassy eyes! And old Satan, to their apprehensions, grinning behind a looking-glass held up before them, to frighten them with the horror visible in their own countenances!

For my own part, if I can get some good family to credit me with a sister or a daughter, as I have now an increased fortune, which will enable me to propose handsome settlements, I will desert ye all; marry, and live a life of reason, rather than a life of brute, for the time to come.

LETTER LXXVII.

MR. BELFORD TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Thursday night.

I WAS forced to take back my twenty guineas. How the women managed it, I can't tell (I suppose they too readily found a purchaser for the rich suit;) but she mistrusted, that I was the advancer of the money; and would not let the clothes go. But Mrs. Lovick has actually sold for fifteen guineas, some rich lace worth three times the sum; out of which she repaid her the money she bor-

rowed for fees to the doctor, in an illness occasioned by the barbarity of the most savage of men. *Thou knowest his name!*

The doctor called on her in the morning, it seems, and had a short debate with her about fees. She insisted, that he should take one every time he came, write or not write; mistrusting, that he only gave verbal directions to Mrs. Lovick, or the nurse, to avoid taking any.

He said, that it would have been impossible for him, had he *not* been a physician, to forbear inquiries after the health and welfare of so excellent a person. He had not the thought of paying her a compliment in declining the offered fee: but he knew her case could not so suddenly vary, as to demand his daily visits. She must permit him, therefore, to inquire of the women below after her health; and he must not think of coming up, if he were to be *pecuniarily* rewarded for the satisfaction he was so desirous to give himself.

It ended in a compromise for a fee each other time; which she unwillingly submitted to; telling him, that though she was at present desolate and in disgrace, yet her circumstances were, of right, high; and no expenses could rise so, as to be scrupled, whether she lived or died. But she submitted, she added, to the compromise, in hopes to see him as often as he had opportunity; for she really looked upon him, and Mr. Goddard, from their kind and tender treatment of her, with a regard next to filial.

I hope thou wilt make thyself acquainted with this worthy doctor, when thou comest to town; and give him thy thanks, for putting her into conceit with the sex that thou hast given her so much reason to execrate.

Farewell.

LETTER LXXVIII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

M. Hall, Friday, July 21.

JUST returned from an interview with this Hickman: a precise fop of a fellow, as starched as his ruffles.

Thou knowest I love him not, Jack; and whom we love not, we cannot allow a merit to; *perhaps not the merit they should be granted.* However, I am in earnest, when I say, that he seems to me to be so set, so prim, so affected, so mincing, yet so clouterly in his person, that I dare engage for thy opinion, if thou dost justice to him, and to thyself, that thou never beheldest such another, except in a pier glass.

I'll tell thee how I play'd him off.

He came in his own chariot to Dormer's; and we took a turn in the garden, at his request. He was devilish ceremonious, and made a bushel of apologies for the freedom he was going to take: and, after half a hundred hums and haws, told me, that he came—that he came—to wait on me—at the request of *dear Miss Howe,* on the account—on the account of Miss Harlowe.

Well, sir, speak on, said I: but give me leave to say, that if your book be as long as your preface, it will take up a week to read it.

This was pretty rough, thou'lt say: but there's nothing like balking these formalists at first. When they are put out of their road, they are filled with doubts of themselves, and can never get into it again: so that an honest fellow, impertinently attacked, as I was, has all the game in his own hand quite through the conference.

He stroked his chin, and hardly knew what to say. At last, after parenthesis within parenthesis, apologizing for apologies, in imitation, I suppose, of Swift's Digression in praise of Digressions—I presume, I presume, sir, you were privy to the visit made to Miss Howe by the young ladies your cousins, in the name of Lord M. and Lady Sarah Sadleir, and Lady Betty Lawrance.

I *was*, sir: and Miss Howe had a letter afterwards, signed by his lordship and by those ladies, and underwritten by myself. Have you seen it, sir?

I can't say but I have. It is the principal cause of this visit: for Miss Howe thinks your part of it is written with such an air of levity—pardon me, sir—that she knows not whether you are in earnest, or not, in your address to *her* for her interest with her *friend* *.

Will Miss Howe permit me to explain myself in person to her, Mr. Hickman?

O sir, by no means. Miss Howe, I am sure, would not give you that trouble.

I should not think it a trouble. I will most readily attend you, sir, to Miss Howe, and satisfy her in all her scruples. Come, sir, I will wait upon you now. You have a chariot. Are alone. We can talk as we ride.

He hesitated, wriggled, winced, stroked his ruffles, set his wig, and pulled his neckcloth, which was long enough for a bib.—I am not going directly back to Miss Howe, sir. It will be as well, if you will be so good as to satisfy Miss Howe by me.

What is it she scruples, Mr. Hickman?

* See Mr. Lovelace's billet to Miss Howe, p. 247, of this volume.

Why, sir, Miss Howe observes, that in your part of the letter, you say—but let me see, sir—I have a copy of what you wrote [pulling it out.] Will you give me leave, sir?—Thus you begin—*Dear Miss Howe*—

No offence, I hope, Mr. Hickman?

None in the least, sir!—None at all, sir!—Taking aim, as it were, to read.

Do you use spectacles, Mr. Hickman?

Spectacles, sir! His whole broad face lifted up at me: spectacles!—What makes you ask me such a question? Such a young man as I use spectacles, sir!—

They do in Spain, Mr. Hickman: young as well as old, to save their eyes.—Have you ever read Prior's *Alma,* Mr. Hickman?

I have, sir—custom is every thing in nations, as well as with individuals: I know the meaning of your question—but 'tis not the *English* custom.

Were you ever in Spain, Mr. Hickman?

No, sir: I have been in Holland.

In Holland, sir!—Never in France or Italy?—I was resolved to travel with him into the land of *Puzzledom.*

No, sir, I cannot say I have as yet.

That's a wonder, sir, when on the continent!

I went on a particular affair: I was obliged to return soon.

Well, sir; you were going to read—pray be pleased to proceed.

Again he took aim, as if his eyes were older than the rest of him; and read, *After what is written above, and signed by names and characters of such unquestionable honour*—To be sure, (taking off his eye) nobody questions the honour of Lord M. nor that of the good ladies who signed the letter.

I hope, Mr. Hickman, nobody questions mine neither?

If you please, sir, I will read on.—*I might have been excused signing a name, almost as hateful to myself* [you are pleased to say]—*as I KNOW it is to* you.

Well, Mr. Hickman, I must interrupt you at this place. In what I wrote to Miss Howe, I distinguished the word KNOW. I had a reason for it. Miss Howe has been very free with my character. I have never done her any harm. I take it very ill of her. And I hope, sir, you come in her name to make excuses for it.

Miss Howe, sir, is a very polite young lady. She is not accustomed to treat any man's character unbecomingly.

Then *I* have the more reason to take it amiss, Mr. Hickman.

Why, sir, you know the friendship—

No friendship should warrant such freedoms as Miss Howe has taken with my character.

(I believe he began to wish he had not come near me. He seemed quite disconcerted.)

Have you not heard Miss Howe treat my name with great—

Sir, I come not to offend or affront you: but you know what a love there is between Miss Howe and Miss Harlowe. I doubt, sir, you have not treated Miss Harlowe, as so fine a young lady deserved to be treated. And if love for her friend has made Miss Howe take freedoms, as you call them, a mind not ungenerous, on such an occasion, will rather be sorry for having given the *cause*, than—

I know your consequence, sir!—But I'd rather have this reproof from a lady, than from a gentleman. I have a great desire to wait upon Miss Howe.

I am persuaded we should soon come to a good understanding. Generous minds are always of kin. I know we should agree in every thing. Pray, Mr. Hickman, be so kind as to introduce me to Miss Howe.

Sir—I can signify your desire, if you please, to Miss Howe.

Do so. Be pleased to read on, Mr. Hickman.

He did very formally, as if I remembered not what I had written; and when he came to the passage about the halter, the parson, and the hangman, (reading it) Why, sir, said he, does not this look like a jest?—Miss Howe thinks it does. It is not in the lady's *power*, you know, sir, to doom you to the gallows.

Then, if it were, Mr. Hickman, you think she would?

You say here to Miss Howe, proceeded he, that Miss Harlowe is the *most injured of her sex*. I know, from Miss Howe, that she highly resents the injuries you own: insomuch that Miss Howe doubts that she shall never prevail upon her to overlook them: and as your family are all desirous you should repair her wrongs, and likewise desire Miss Howe's interposition with her friend; Miss Howe fears, from this part of your letter, that you are too much in jest; and that your offer to do her justice is rather in compliment to your friends' entreaties, than proceeding from your own inclinations: and she desires to know your true sentiments on this occasion, before she interposes further.

Do you think, Mr. Hickman, that, if I am capable of deceiving my own relations, I have so much obligation to Miss Howe, who has always treated me with great freedom, as to acknowledge to *her*, what I don't to *them*?

Sir, I beg pardon: but Miss Howe thinks that, as you have written to her, she may ask you, by me, for an explanation of what you have written.

You see, Mr. Hickman, something of me.—Do *you* think I am in jest, or in earnest?

I see, sir, you are a gay gentleman, of fine spirits, and all that—all I beg in Miss Howe's name, is, to know if you really, and *bonâ fide,* join with your friends in desiring her to use her interest to reconcile you to Miss Harlowe?

I should be extremely glad to be reconciled to Miss Harlowe; and should owe great obligations to Miss Howe, if she could bring about so happy an event.

Well, sir, and you have no objections to marriage, I presume, as the condition of that reconciliation?

I never liked matrimony in my life. I must be plain with you, Mr. Hickman.

I am sorry for it: I think it a very happy state.

I hope you will find it so, Mr. Hickman.

I doubt not but I shall, sir. And I dare say, so would you, if you were to have Miss Harlowe.

If I could be happy in it with any body, it would be with Miss Harlowe.

I am surprised, sir!—Then, after all, you don't think of marrying Miss Harlowe!—After the hard usage——

What hard usage, Mr. Hickman? I don't doubt but a lady of her niceness has represented what would appear trifles to any other, in a very strong light.

If what I have had hinted to me, sir—excuse me—has been offered to the lady, she has more than trifles to complain of.

Let me know what you have heard, Mr. Hick-

man. I will very truly answer to the accusations.

Sir, you know best what you have done: you own the lady is the *most injured, as well as the most deserving of her sex.*

I do, sir; and yet I would be glad to know what you have *heard;* for on that depends my answer to the questions Miss Howe puts to me by you.

Why then, sir, since you ask it, you cannot be displeased if I answer you:—in the first place, sir, you will acknowledge, I suppose, that you promised Miss Harlowe marriage, and all that?

Well, sir, and I suppose what you have to charge me with is, that I was desirous to have *all that,* without marriage.

Cot-so, sir, I know you are deemed to be a man of wit: but may I not ask, if these things sit not too light upon you?

When a thing is done, and cannot be helped, 'tis right to make the best of it. I wish the lady would think so too.

I think, sir, ladies should not be deceived. I think a promise to a lady should be as binding as to any other person, at the least.

I *believe* you think so, Mr. Hickman: and I believe you are a very honest good sort of a man.

I would always keep my word, sir, whether to man or woman.

You say well. And far be it from me to persuade you to do otherwise. But what have you further heard?

(Thou wilt think, Jack, I must be very desirous to know in what light my elected wife had represented things to Miss Howe; and how far Miss Howe had communicated them to Mr. Hickman.)

Sir, this is no part of my present business.

But, Mr. Hickman, 'tis part of mine. I hope you would not expect, that I should answer *your* questions, at the same time that you refuse to answer *mine*. What, pray, have you further heard?

Why then, sir, if I must say, I am told, that Miss Harlowe was carried to a very bad house.

Why, indeed, the people did not prove so good as they should be.—What further have you heard?

I have heard, sir, that the lady had strange advantages taken of her, very *unfair* ones: but what I cannot say.

And *cannot* you say? Cannot you *guess?*—Then I'll tell you, sir. Perhaps some liberty was taken with her when she was asleep. Do you think no lady ever was taken at such an advantage?—You know, Mr. Hickman, that ladies are very shy of trusting themselves with the modestest of our sex, when they are disposed to sleep; and why so, if they did not *expect* that advantages would be taken of them at such times?

But, sir, had not the lady something given her to make her sleep?

Ay, Mr. Hickman, that's the question: I want to know if the lady says she had?

I have not seen all she has written; but by what I have heard, it is a very black affair—excuse me, sir.

I do excuse you, Mr. Hickman: but, supposing it were so, do you think a lady was never imposed upon by wine, or so?—Do you think the most cautious woman in the world might not be cheated by a stronger liquor for a smaller, when she was thirsty, after a fatigue in this very warm weather! And do you think, if she was thus thrown into a profound sleep, that she is the only lady that ever was taken at such advantage?

Even as you make it, Mr. Lovelace, this matter is

not a light one. But I fear it is a great deal heavier than as you put it.

What reasons have you to fear this, sir? What has the lady said? Pray let me know. I have *reason* to be so earnest.

Why, sir, Miss Howe herself knows not the whole. The lady promises to give her all the particulars at a proper time, if she lives; but has said enough to make it out to be a very bad affair.

I am glad Miss Harlowe has not yet given all the particulars. And since she has not, you may tell Miss Howe from me, that neither she nor any woman in the world can be more virtuous than Miss Harlowe is to this hour, as to her own mind. Tell her that I hope she never *will* know the particulars; but that she has been unworthily used: tell her, that though I know not what she has said, yet I have such an opinion of her veracity, that I would blindly subscribe to the truth of every tittle of it, though it make me ever so black. Tell her, that I have but *three* things to blame her for; *one*, that she won't give me an opportunity of repairing her wrongs: the *second*, that she is so ready to acquaint every body with what she has suffered, that it will put it out of my power to redress those wrongs, with any tolerable reputation to either of us. Will this, Mr. Hickman, answer any part of the intentions of this visit?

Why, sir, this is talking like a man of honour, I own. But you say there is a *third* thing you blame the lady for: may I ask what that is?

I don't know, sir, whether I ought to tell it you, or not. Perhaps you won't believe it, if I do. But though the lady will tell the *truth*, and nothing *but* the truth; yet, perhaps, she will not tell you the *whole* truth.

Pray, sir—but it mayn't be proper:—yet you

give me great curiosity. Sure there is no misconduct in the lady. I hope there is not. I am sure, if Miss Howe did not believe her to be faultless in every particular, she would not interest herself so much in her favour as she does, dearly as she loves her.

I love Miss Harlowe too well, Mr. Hickman, to wish to lessen her in Miss Howe's opinion; especially as she is abandoned of every other friend. But, perhaps, it would hardly be credited, if I should tell you.

I should be very sorry, sir, and so would Miss Howe, if this poor lady's conduct had laid her under obligation to you for this reserve.—You have so much the appearance of a gentleman, as well as are so much distinguished in your family and fortunes, that I hope you are incapable of loading such a young lady as this, in order to lighten yourself. Excuse me, sir.

I do, I do, Mr. Hickman. You say you came not with any intention to affront me. I take freedom, and I give it. I should be very loth, I repeat, to say any thing that may weaken Miss Harlowe in the good opinion of the only friend she thinks she has left.

It may not be proper, said he, for me to know your *third* article against this unhappy lady: but I never heard of any body, out of her own implacable family, that had the least doubt of her honour. *Mrs.* Howe, indeed, once said, after a conference with one of her uncles, that she feared all was not right on her side—but else, I never heard—

Oons, sir, in a fierce tone, and with an erect mien, stopping short upon him, which made him start back—'Tis next to blasphemy to question this lady's honour. She is more pure than a vestal; for vestals have been often warmed by their own

fires. No age, from the first to the present, ever produced, nor will the future, to the end of the world, I dare aver, ever produce, a young blooming lady, tried as she has been tried, who has stood all trials as she has done.—Let me tell you, sir, that you never saw, never knew, never heard of, such another woman, as Miss Harlowe.

Sir, sir, I beg your pardon. Far be it from me to question the lady. You have not heard me say a word, that could be so construed. I have the utmost honour for her. Miss Howe loves her, as she loves her own soul; and that she would not do, if she were not sure she were as virtuous as herself.

As herself, sir!—I have a high opinion of Miss Howe, sir—but, I dare say—

What, sir, dare you say of Miss Howe!—I hope, sir, you will not presume to say any thing to the disparagement of Miss Howe.

Presume, Mr. Hickman!—That is *presuming* language, let me tell you, Mr. Hickman!

The *occasion* for it, Mr. Lovelace, if designed, is *presuming*, if you please.—I am not a man ready to take offence, sir—especially where I am employed as a mediator. But no man breathing shall say disparaging things of Miss Howe, in my hearing, without observation.

Well said, Mr. Hickman. I dislike not your spirit on such a *supposed* occasion. But what I was going to say is this. That there is not, in my opinion, a woman in the world, who ought to compare herself with Miss Clarissa Harlowe till she has stood *her* trials, and has behaved *under* them, and *after* them, as she has done. You see, sir, I speak against myself. You see I do. For, libertine as I am thought to be, I never will attempt to bring down the measures of right and wrong to the standard of my actions.

Well, sir, this is very right. It is very *noble*, I will say. But 'tis pity—excuse me, sir—'tis pity, that the man who can pronounce so fine a sentence, will not square his actions accordingly.

That, Mr. Hickman, is another point. We all err in some things. I wish not that Miss Howe should have Miss Harlowe's trials: and I rejoice that she is in no danger of any such from so good a man.

(Poor Hickman!—He looked as if he knew not whether I meant a compliment or a reflection!)

But, proceeded I, since I find that I have excited your curiosity, that you may not go away with a doubt that may be injurious to the most admirable of women, I am inclined to hint to you, what I have in the *third* place to blame her for.

Sir, as you please—it may not be proper—

It cannot be very *improper*, Mr. Hickman—so let me ask you, what would Miss Howe think, if her friend is the *more* determined against me, because she thinks (in revenge to me, I verily believe that!) of encouraging another lover?

How, sir!—Sure this cannot be the case;—I can tell you, sir, if Miss Howe thought this, she would not approve of it at all: for, little as you think Miss Howe likes you, sir, and little as she approves of your actions by her friend, I know she is of opinion, that she ought to have nobody living but you: and, should continue single all her life, if she be not yours.

Revenge and obstinacy, Mr. Hickman, will make women, the best of them, do very unaccountable things. Rather than not put out both eyes of the man they are offended with, they will give up one of their own.

I don't know what to say to this, sir: but, sure,

she cannot encourage any other person's address!—So soon too—why, sir, she is, as we are told, so ill, and so *weak*—

Not in resentment, weak, I'll assure you. I am well acquainted with all her movements—and I tell you, believe it or not, that she refuses *me* in view of *another* lover.

Can it be?

'Tis true, by my soul!—Has she not hinted this to Miss Howe, do you think?

No, indeed, sir. If she had I should not have troubled you at this time from Miss Howe.

Well then, you see I am right: that though she cannot be guilty of a falsehood, yet she has not told her friend the whole truth.

What shall a man say to these things!—(looking most stupidly perplexed.)

Say! say! Mr. Hickman!—Who can account for the workings and ways of a passionate and offended woman? Endless would be the histories I could give you, within my own knowledge, of the dreadful effects of women's passionate resentments, and what that sex will do when disappointed.

There was Miss Dorrington [perhaps you know her not] who ran away with her father's groom, because he would not let her have a half-pay officer, with whom (her passions all up) she fell in love at first sight, as he accidentally passed under her window.

There was Miss Savage; she married her mother's coachman, because her mother refused her a journey to Wales; in apprehension, that Miss intended to league herself with a remote cousin of unequal fortunes, of whom she was not a little fond when he was a visiting guest at their house for a week.

There was the young widow Sanderson; who

believing herself slighted by a younger brother of a noble family (Sarah Stout like) took it into her head to drown herself.

Miss Sally Anderson, [you have heard of her, no doubt] being checked by her uncle for encouraging an address beneath her, in spite, threw herself into the arms of an ugly dog, a shoemaker's apprentice, running away with him in a pair of shoes he had just fitted to her feet, though she never saw the fellow before, and hated him ever after: and, at last, took laudanum to make her forget for ever her own folly.

But can there be a stronger instance in point, than what the unaccountable resentments of *such* a lady as Miss Clarissa Harlowe affords us? who at this very instant, ill as she is, not only encourages, but, in a manner, makes court to, one of the most odious dogs that ever was seen? I think Miss Howe should not be told this—and yet she ought too, in order to dissuade her from such a preposterous rashness.

O fie! O strange! Miss Howe knows nothing of this! To be sure she won't look upon her, if this be true!

'Tis true, very true, Mr. Hickman! True as I am here to tell you so!—And he is an ugly fellow too; uglier to look at than me.

Than *you*, sir! Why, to be sure, you are one of the handsomest men in England.

Well, but the wretch she so spitefully prefers to me is a mis-shapen, meagre varlet; more like a skeleton than a man! Then he dresses—you never saw a devil so bedizened! Hardly a coat to his back, nor a shoe to his foot. A bald-pated villain, yet grudges to buy a peruke to hide his baldness: for he is as covetous as hell, never satisfied, yet plaguy rich.

Why, sir, there is some joke in this, surely. A man of common parts knows not how to take such gentlemen as you. But, sir, if there be any truth in the story, what is he? Some Jew, or miserly citizen, I suppose, that may have presumed on the lady's distressful circumstances; and your lively wit points him out as it pleases.

Why, the rascal has estates in every county *in* England, and *out of* England too.

Some East India governor, I suppose, if there be any thing in it. The lady once had thoughts of going abroad. But, I fancy, all this time you are in jest, sir. If not, we must surely have heard of him——

Heard of him! ay, sir, we have all heard of him—but none of us care to be intimate with him—except this lady—and that, as I told you, in spite to me—His name, in short, is DEATH!—DEATH, sir, stamping, and speaking loud, and full in his ear; which made him jump half a yard high.

Thou never beheldedst any man so disconcerted. He looked as if the frightful skeleton was before him, and he had not his accounts ready. When a little recovered, he fribbled with his waistcoat buttons, as if he had been telling his beads.

This, sir, proceeded I, is her wooer!—Nay, she is so forward a girl, that she *wooes him:* but I hope it never will be a match.

He had before behaved, and now looked, with more spirit than I expected from him.

I came, sir, said he, as a mediator of differences. It behoves me to keep my temper. But, sir, and turned short upon me, as much as I love peace, and to promote it, I will not be ill used.

As I had played so much upon him, it would have been wrong to take him at his *more* than half

menace: yet, I think, I owe him a grudge, for his presuming to address Miss Howe.

You mean no defiance, I presume, Mr. Hickman, any more than I do offence. On that presumption, I ask your excuse. But this is my way. I mean no harm. I cannot let sorrow touch my heart. I cannot be grave six minutes together, for the blood of me. I am a descendant of old chancellor Moore, I believe, and should not forbear to cut a joke, were I upon the scaffold. But you may gather, from what I have *said,* that I prefer Miss Harlowe, and that upon the justest grounds, to all the women in the world: and I wonder, that there should be any difficulty to believe, from what I have signed, and from what I have promised to my relations, and enabled them to promise for me, that I should be glad to marry that excellent creature upon her own terms. I acknowledge to you, Mr. Hickman, that I have basely injured her. If she will honour me with her hand, I declare, that it is my intention to make her the best of husbands.—But, nevertheless, I must say, that, if she goes on appealing her case, and exposing us both, as she does, it is impossible to think the knot can be knit with reputation to either. And although, Mr. Hickman, I have delivered my apprehensions under so ludicrous a figure, I am afraid that she will ruin her constitution; and, by seeking death when she may shun him, will not be able to avoid him when she would be glad to do so.

This cool and honest speech let down his stiffened muscles into complacence. He was my very obedient and faithful humble servant several times over, as I waited on him to his chariot: and I was his almost as often.

And so *exit* Hickman.

LETTER LXXIX.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

[*In answer to Letters* lxxii. lxxvi. lxxvii.]

Friday night, July 21.

I WILL throw away a few paragraphs upon the contents of thy last shocking letters just brought me; and send what I shall write by the fellow who carries mine on the interview with Hickman.

Reformation, I see, is coming fast upon thee. Thy uncle's slow death, and thy attendance upon him, through every stage towards it, prepared thee for it. But go thou on in thine own way, as I will in mine. Happiness consists in being pleased with what we do: and if thou canst find delight in being *sad*, it will be as well for thee, as if thou wert *merry*, though no other person should join to keep thee in countenance.

I am, nevertheless, exceedingly disturbed at the lady's ill health. It is entirely owing to the cursed arrest. She was absolutely triumphant over me and the whole crew *before*. Thou believest me guiltless of that: so, I hope, does she.—The rest, as I have often said, is a common case; only a little uncommonly circumstanced; that's all: why, then, all these severe things from her and from thee?

As to selling her clothes, and her laces, and so forth, it has, I own, a shocking sound with it. What an implacable as well as unjust set of wretches are those of her unkindredly kin who have money of hers in their hands, as well as large arrears of her own estate; yet withhold both, *avowedly* to distress her! But may she not have money of that proud and saucy friend of hers, Miss Howe, more than

she wants?—And should not I be overjoyed, thinkest thou, to serve her?—What then is there in the parting with her apparel, but female perverseness?—And I am not sure, whether I ought not to be glad, if she does this out of *spite to me.*—Some disappointed fair ones would have hanged, some drowned themselves. My beloved only revenges herself upon her clothes. Different ways of working has passion in different bosoms, as humours or complexion induce.—Besides, dost think I shall grudge to replace, to three times the value, what she disposes of? So, Jack, there is no great matter in this.

Thou seest how sensible she is of the soothings of the polite doctor: this will enable thee to judge how dreadfully the horrid arrest, and her gloomy father's curse, must have hurt her. I have great hope, if she will but see me, that my behaviour, my contrition, my soothings, may have some happy effects upon her.

But thou art too ready to give me up. Let me seriously tell thee, that all excellence as she is, I think the earnest interposition of my relations; the implored mediation of that little fury Miss Howe; and the commissions thou actest under from myself; are such instances of condescension and high value in *them,* and such contrition in *me,* that nothing further can be done.—So here let the matter rest for the present, till she considers better of it.

But now a few words upon poor Belton's case. I own I was at first a little startled at the disloyalty of his Thomasine. Her hypocrisy to be for so many years undetected!—I have very lately had some intimations given me of her vileness; and had intended to mention them to thee, when I saw thee. To say the truth, I always suspected

her *eye:* the *eye,* thou knowest, is the *casement,* at which the *heart* generally looks out. Many a woman, who will not show herself at the *door,* has tipt the sly, the intelligible *wink* from the *windows.*

But Tom had no management at all. A very careless fellow. Would never look into his own affairs. The estate his uncle left him was his ruin: wife, or mistress, whoever was, must have had his fortune to sport with.

I have often hinted his weakness of this sort to him; and the danger he was in of becoming the property of designing people. But he hated to take pains. He would ever run away from his accounts; as now, poor fellow! he would be glad to do from himself. Had he not had a *woman* to fleece him, his *coachman* or *valet* would have been his *prime minister,* and done it as effectually.

But yet, for many years, I thought she was true to his bed. At least I thought the boys were his own. For though they are muscular and big boned, yet I supposed the healthy mother might have furnished them with legs and shoulders: for she is not of a delicate frame; and then Tom, some years ago, looked up, and spoke more like a man, than he has done of late; squeaking inwardly, poor fellow! for some time past, from contracted quail pipes, and wheezing from lungs half spit away.

He complains, thou sayest, that we all run away from him. Why, after all, Belford, it is no pleasant thing to see a poor fellow one loves, dying by inches, yet unable to do him good. There are friendships which are only *bottle deep:* I should be loth to have it thought, that mine for any of my vassals is such a one. Yet, with gay hearts, which *became intimate because they were gay,* the reason for their first intimacy ceasing, the friendship will

fade: but may not this sort of friendship be more properly distinguished by the word *companionship*?

But mine, as I said, is deeper than this: I would still be as ready as ever I was in my life, to the utmost of my power, to do him service.

As one instance of this my readiness to extricate him from all his difficulties as to Thomasine, dost thou care to propose to him an expedient, that is just come into my head?

It is this: I would engage Thomasine and her cubs (if Belton be convinced they are neither of them his) in a party of pleasure. She was always complaisant to me. It should be in a boat, hired for the purpose, to sail to Tilbury, to the Isle of Shepey, or pleasuring up the Medway; and 'tis but contriving to turn the boat bottom upward. I can swim like a fish. Another boat shall be ready to take up whom I should direct, for fear of the worst: and then, if Tom has a mind to be decent, one suit of mourning will serve for all three: nay, the hostler cousin may take his plunge from the steerage: and who knows but they may be thrown up on the beach, Thomasine and he hand in hand?

This, thou'lt say, is no *common* instance of friendship.

Meantime, do thou prevail on him to come down to us: he never was more welcome in his life, than he shall be now: if he will not, let him find me some other service; and I will clap a pair of wings to my shoulders, and he shall see me come flying in at his windows at the word of command.

Mowbray and Tourville each intend to give thee a letter; and I leave to those rough varlets to handle thee as thou deservest, for the shocking picture thou hast drawn of their last ends. Thy own past guilt has stared thee full in the face, one may see

by it: and made thee, in consciousness of thy demerits, sketch out these cursed outlines. I am glad thou hast got the old fiend to hold the glass * before thy own face so soon. Thou must be in earnest surely, when thou wrotest it, and have severe conviction upon thee: for what a hardened varlet must he be, who could draw such a picture as this in sport?

As for thy resolution of repenting and marrying; I would have thee consider which thou wilt set about first. If thou wilt follow my advice, thou shalt make short work of it: let matrimony take place of the other; for then thou wilt, very possibly, have repentance come tumbling in fast upon thee, as a consequence, and so have both in one.

LETTER LXXX.

MR. BELFORD TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Friday noon, July 21.

THIS morning I was admitted, as soon as I sent up my name, into the presence of the divine lady. Such I may call her; as what I have to relate will fully prove.

She had had a tolerable night, and was much better in spirits; though weak in person; and visibly declining in looks.

Mrs. Lovick and Mrs. Smith were with her; and accused her, in a gentle manner, of having applied herself too assiduously to her pen for her strength, having been up ever since five. She said, she had rested better than she had done for many nights:

* See p. 353.

she had found her spirits free, and her mind tolerably easy: and having, as she had reason to think, but a short time, and much to do in it, she must be a good housewife of her hours.*

She had been writing, she said, a letter to her sister: but had not pleased herself in it: though she had made two or three essays: but that the last must go.

By hints I had dropt from time to time, she had reason, she said, to think that I knew every thing that concerned her and her family; and, if so, must be acquainted with the heavy curse her father had laid upon her; which had been dreadfully fulfilled in one part, as to her prospects in this life, and that in a very short time; which gave her great apprehensions of the other part. She had been applying herself to her sister, to obtain a revocation of it. I hope my father will revoke it, said she, or I shall be very miserable—yet [and she gasped as she spoke, with apprehension]—I am ready to tremble at what the answer may be; for my sister is hard hearted.

I said something reflecting upon her friends; as to what they would deserve to be thought of, if the unmerited imprecation were not withdrawn—upon which she took me up, and talked in such a dutiful manner of her parents as must doubly condemn them (if they remain implacable) for their inhuman treatment of such a daughter.

She said, I must not blame her parents: it was her dear Miss Howe's fault to do so: but what an enormity was there in her crime, which could set the best of parents (as they had been to her, till she disobliged them) in a bad light, for resenting the rashness of a child from whose education they had reason to expect better fruits! There were some hard circumstances in her case, it was true: but my

friend could tell me, that no *one* person, throughout the whole fatal transaction, had acted out of character, but *herself*. She submitted therefore to the penalty she had incurred. If they had any fault, it was only, that they would not inform themselves of some circumstances, which would alleviate a little her misdeed; and that, supposing her a more guilty creature than she was, they punished her without a hearing.

Lord!—*I was going to curse thee, Lovelace! How every instance of excellence, in this all-excelling creature, condemns thee;—thou wilt have reason to think thyself of all men the most accursed, if she die!*

I then besought her, while she was capable of such glorious instances of generosity and forgiveness, to extend her goodness to a man, whose heart bled in every vein of it for the injuries he had done her; and who would make it the study of his whole life to repair them.

The women would have withdrawn when the subject became so particular. But she would not permit them to go. She told me, that if after this time I was for entering with so much earnestness into a subject so very disagreeable to *her*, my visits must not be repeated. Nor was there occasion, she said, for my friendly offices in your favour; since she had begun to write her whole mind upon that subject to Miss Howe, in answer to letters from her, in which Miss Howe urged the same arguments, in compliment to the wishes of your noble and worthy relations.

Meantime, you may let him know, said she, that I reject him with my whole heart:—yet, that, although I say this with such a determination as shall leave no room for doubt, I say it not however with passion. On the contrary, tell him, that I am trying to bring my mind into such a frame as to be able to *pity* him [poor perjured wretch! what

has he not to answer for!] and that I shall not think myself qualified for the state I am aspiring to, if, after a few struggles more, I cannot *forgive* him too: and I hope, clasping her hands together, uplifted as were her eyes, my dear *earthly* father will set me the example my *heavenly* one has already set us all; and, by forgiving his fallen daughter, teach her to forgive the man, who then, I hope, will not have destroyed my eternal prospects, as he has my temporal!

Stop here, thou wretch!—But I need not bid thee! —for I can go no further!

LETTER LXXXI.

MR. BELFORD. IN CONTINUATION.

You will imagine how affecting her noble speech and behaviour were to me, at the time, when the bare recollecting and transcribing them obliged me to drop my pen. The women had tears in their eyes. I was silent for a few moments.—At last, Matchless excellence! inimitable goodness! I called her, with a voice so accented, that I was half ashamed of myself, as it was before the women—but who could stand such sublime generosity of soul in so young a creature, her loveliness giving grace to all she said?—Methinks, said I, [and I really, in a manner involuntarily, bent my knee] I have before me an angel indeed. I can hardly forbear prostration, and to beg your influence to draw me after you, to the world you are aspiring to!—Yet—but what shall I say—only, dearest excellence, make me, in some small instances, serviceable to you, that I may (if I survive you) have the glory to think I was able to contribute to your satisfaction, while among us.

Here I stopt. She was silent. I proceeded—Have you no commission to employ me in; deserted as you are by all your friends; among strangers, though, I doubt not, worthy people? Cannot I be serviceable by message, by letter writing, by attending personally, with either message, or letter, your father, your uncles, your brother, your sister, Miss Howe, Lord M. or the ladies his sisters?—Any office to be employed in to serve you, absolutely *independent* of my *friend's* wishes, or of my own wishes to oblige him? Think, madam, if I cannot?

I thank you, sir: very heartily I thank you: but in nothing that I can at present think of, or at least resolve upon, can you do me service. I will see what return the letter I have written will bring me.—Till then——

My life and my fortune, interrupted I, are devoted to your service. Permit me to observe, that here you are, without one natural friend; and (so much do I know of your unhappy case) that you must be in a manner destitute of the means to *make* friends—

She was going to interrupt me, with a prohibibitory kind of earnestness in her manner.

I beg leave to proceed, madam: I have cast about twenty ways how to mention this before, but never dared till now. Suffer me, now that I have broken the ice, to tender myself—as your *banker* only.—I know you will not be obliged: you *need* not. You have sufficient of your own, if it were in your hands; and from *that*, whether you live or die, will I consent to be reimbursed. I do assure you, that the unhappy man shall never know either *my* offer or *your* acceptance—only permit me this small——

And down behind her chair I dropt a bank note

of 100*l.* which I had brought with me, intending some how or other to leave it behind me: nor shouldst thou ever have known it, had she favoured me with the acceptance of it; as I told her.

'You give me great pain, Mr. Belford, said she, by these instances of your humanity. And yet, considering the company I have seen you in, I am not sorry to find you capable of such. Methinks I am glad, for the sake of human nature, that there could be but *one* such man in the world, as he you and I know. But as to your kind offer, whatever it be, if you take it not up, you will greatly disturb me. I have no need of your kindness. I have effects enough, which I never can want, to supply my present occasions: and, if needful, can have recourse to Miss Howe. I have promised that I would—so, pray, sir, urge not upon me this favour. Take it up yourself—if you mean me peace and ease of mind, urge not this favour.—And she spoke with impatience.

I beg, madam, but one word——

Not one, sir, till you have taken back what you have let fall. I doubt not either the *honour*, or the *kindness*, of your offer; but you must not say one word more on this subject. I cannot bear it.

She was stooping, but with pain. I therefore prevented her; and besought her to forgive me for a tender, which, I saw, had been more discomposing to her than I had hoped (from the purity of my intentions) it would be. But I could not bear to think, that such a mind as hers should be distressed: since the want of the conveniences she was used to abound in might affect and disturb her in the divine course she was in.

You are very kind to me, sir, said she, and very favourable in your opinion of me. But I hope, that

I cannot now be easily put out of my present course. My declining health will more and more confirm me in it. Those who arrested and confined me, no doubt, thought they had fallen upon the ready method to distress me so, as to bring me into all their measures. But I presume to hope, that I have a mind that cannot be debased, in *essential instances*, by *temporal calamities;* little do those poor wretches know of the force of innate principles (forgive my own *implied* vanity, was her word) who imagine, that a prison, or penury, can bring a right turned mind to be guilty of a wilful baseness, in order to avoid such *short lived evils*.

She then turned from me towards the window, with a dignity suitable to her words; and such as showed her to be more of soul than of body, at that instant.

What magnanimity!—No wonder a virtue so solidly founded could baffle all thy arts:—and that it forced thee (in order to carry thy accursed point) to have recourse to those unnatural ones, which robbed her of her charming senses.

The women were extremely affected, Mrs. Lovick especially; who said whisperingly to Mrs. Smith, We have an angel, not a woman, with us, Mrs. Smith!

I repeated my offers to write to any of her friends; and told her, that, having taken the liberty to acquaint Dr. H. with the cruel displeasure of her relations, as what I presumed lay nearest her heart, he had proposed to write himself, to acquaint her friends how ill she was, if she would not take it amiss.

It was kind in the *doctor*, she said: but begged, that no step of that sort might be taken without her knowledge or consent. She would wait to see what effects her letter to her sister would have. All she

had to hope for, was, that her father would revoke his malediction, previous to the last blessing she should then implore: for the rest, her friends would think she could not suffer too much; and she was content to suffer: for now nothing could happen that could make her wish to live.

Mrs. Smith went down; and, soon returning, asked, if the lady and I would not dine with her that day; for it was her wedding-day. She had engaged Mrs. Lovick she said; and should have nobody else, if we would do her that favour.

The charming creature sighed, and shook her head.—*Wedding-day!* repeated she.—I wish you, Mrs. Smith, many happy wedding-days!—But you will excuse *me*.

Mr. Smith came up with the same request. They both applied to me.

On condition the *lady* would, I should make no scruple; and would suspend an engagement: which I actually had.

She then desired they would all sit down. You have several times, Mrs. Lovick and Mrs. Smith; hinted your wishes, that I would give you some little history of myself: now, if you are at leisure, that this gentleman, who, I have reason to believe, knows it all, is present, and can tell you if I give it justly or not, I will oblige your curiosity.

They all eagerly, the man Smith too, sat down; and she began an account of herself, which I will endeavour to repeat, as nearly in her own words as I possibly can: for I know you will think it of importance to be apprized of her manner of relating your barbarity to her, as well as what her sentiments are of it; and what room there is for the hopes your friends have in your favour from her.

'At first when I took these lodgings, said she, I

thought of staying but a short time in them; and so, Mrs. Smith, I told you: I therefore avoided giving any other account of myself than that I was a very unhappy young creature, seduced from good friends, and escaped from very vile wretches.

'This account I thought myself obliged to give, that you might the less wonder at seeing a young creature rushing through your shop, into your back apartment, all trembling and out of breath; an ordinary garb over my own; craving lodging and protection: only giving my bare word, that you should be handsomely paid: all my effects contained in a pocket handkerchief.

'My sudden absence, for three days and nights together, when arrested, must still further surprise you: and although this gentleman, who, perhaps, knows more of the darker part of my story, than I do myself, has informed you (as you, Mrs. Lovick, tell me) that I am only an *unhappy*, not a *guilty* creature; yet I think it incumbent upon me not to suffer honest minds to be in doubt about my character.

'You must know, then, that I have been, in one instance (I had like to have said *but* in one instance; but that was a capital one) an undutiful child to the most indulgent of parents: for what some people call cruelty in them, is owing but to the excess of their love, and to their disappointment, having had reason to expect better from me.

'I was visited (at first, with my friends' connivance) by a man of birth and fortune, but of worse principles, as it proved, than I believed any man could have. My brother, a very headstrong young man, was absent at that time; and, when he returned (from an old grudge, and knowing the gentleman, it is plain, better than I knew him) entirely disapproved of his visits: and, having a great sway in our

family, brought other gentlemen to address me; and at last (several having been rejected) he introduced one extremely disagreeable: in every *indifferent* person's eye as disagreeable. I could not love him. They all joined to compel me to have him; a rencounter between the gentleman my friends were set against, and my brother, having confirmed them all his enemies.

'To be short; I was confined, and treated so very hardly, that, in a rash fit, I appointed to go off with the man they hated. A wicked intention, you'll say! But I was greatly provoked: nevertheless, I repented, and resolved not to go off with him: yet I did not mistrust his honour to me neither; nor his love; because nobody thought me unworthy of the latter; and my fortune was not to be despised. But foolishly (wickedly and contrivingly, as my friends still think, with a design, as they imagine, to abandon them) giving him a private meeting, I was tricked away: poorly enough tricked away, I must needs say; though others, who had been first guilty of so rash a step as the meeting of him was, might have been so deceived and surprised as well as I.

'After remaining some time at a farm-house in the country, and behaving to me all the time with honour, he brought me to handsome lodgings in town till still better provision could be made for me. But they proved to be (as he indeed knew and designed) at a vile, a very vile creature's; though it was long before I found her to be so; for I knew nothing of the town, or its ways.

'There is no repeating what followed: such unprecedented vile arts!—For I gave him no opportunity to take me at any disreputable advantage'—

And here (half covering her sweet face, with her handkerchief put to her tearful eyes) she stopt.

Hastily, as if she would fly from the hateful remembrance, she resumed :—I made my escape afterward from the abominable house in his absence, and came to yours: and this gentleman has almost preva d on me to think, that the ungrateful man did no connive at the vile arrest: which was made, no doubt, in order to get me once more to those wicked lodgings: for nothing do I owe them, except I were to pay them—[she sighed, and again wiped her charming eyes—adding in a softer, lower voice]—'*for being ruined.*'

Indeed, madam, said I, guilty, abominably guilty, as he is in all the rest, he is innocent of this last wicked outrage.

'Well, and so I wish him to be. That evil, heavy as it was, is one of the slightest evils I have suffered. But hence you'll observe, Mrs. Lovick, (for you seemed this morning curious to know if I were not a wife) that I *never was married.*—You, Mr. Belford, no doubt, knew before, that I am no wife: and now I never will be one. Yet, I bless God, that I am not a guilty creature!

'As to my parentage, I am of no mean family; I have in my own right, by the intended favour of my grandfather, a fortune not contemptible: independent of my *father*; if I had pleased; but I never will please.

'My father is very rich. I went by another name when I came to you first: but that was to avoid being discovered by the perfidious man: who now engages, by this gentleman, not to molest me.

'My real name you now know to be Harlowe: *Clarissa* Harlowe. I am not yet twenty years of age.

'I have an excellent mother, as well as father;

a woman of family, and fine sense—worthy of a better child—they both doated upon me,

'I have two good uncles: men of great fortune; jealous of the honour of their family; which I have wounded.

'I was the joy of their hearts; and, with theirs and my father's, I had three houses to call my own; for they used to have me with them by turns, and almost kindly to quarrel for me: so that I was two months in the year with the one; two months with the other; six months at my father's: and two at the houses of others of my dear friends, who thought themselves happy in me: and whenever I was at any one's, I was crowded upon with letters by all the rest, who longed for my return to them.

'In short, I was beloved by every body. The poor—I used to make glad *their* hearts: I never shut my hand to any distress, wherever I was—but now I am poor myself!

'So Mrs. Smith, so Mrs. Lovick, I am *not* married. It is but just to tell you so. And I am now, as I ought to be, in a state of humiliation and penitence for the rash step which has been followed by so much evil. God, I hope, will forgive me, as I am endeavouring to bring my mind to forgive all the world, even the man who has ungratefully, and by dreadful perjuries [poor wretch! he thought all his wickedness to be *wit!*] reduced to this, a young creature, who had *his* happiness in her *view*, and in her *wish*, even beyond this life; and who was believed to be of rank, and fortune, and expectations, considerable enough to make it the *interest* of any gentleman in England to be faithful to his vows to her. But I cannot expect that my parents will forgive me: my refuge must be death; the most painful kind of which I would suffer, ra-

ther than be the wife of one who could act by me, as the man has acted, upon whose birth, education, and honour, I had so much reason to found better expectations.

'I see,' continued she, 'that I, who once was every one's delight, am now the cause of grief to every one—you, that are strangers to me, are moved for me! 'Tis kind!—But 'tis time to stop. Your compassionate hearts, Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Lovick, are too much touched' [for the women sobbed, and the man was also affected.] 'It is barbarous in me, with my woes, thus to sadden your wedding-day.' Then turning to Mr. and Mrs. Smith—'May you see many happy ones, honest, good couple!—How agreeable is it to see you both join so kindly to celebrate it, after many years are gone over you!—I once—but no more!—All my prospects of felicity, as to this life, are at an end. My hopes, like opening buds or blossoms in an over-forward spring, have been nipt by a severe frost!—blighted by an eastern wind!—But I can but *once die*; and if life be spared me, but till I am discharged from a heavy malediction, which my father in his wrath laid upon me, and which is fulfilled literally in every article relating to this world; that, and a last blessing, are all I have to wish for; and death will be welcomer to me, than rest to the most wearied traveller that ever reached his journey's end.'

And then she sunk her head against the back of her chair, and, hiding her face with her handkerchief, endeavoured to conceal her tears from us.

Not a soul of us could speak a word. Thy presence, perhaps, thou hardened wretch, might have made us ashamed of a weakness which perhaps thou wilt deride *me* in particular for, when thou readest this!

She retired to her chamber soon after, and was forced, it seems, to lie down. We all went down together; and for an hour and a half, dwelt upon her praises; Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Lovick repeatedly expressing their astonishment, that there could be a man in the world, capable of offending, much more of wilfully injuring, such a lady; and repeating, that they had an angel in their house.—I thought they had; and that as assuredly as there is a devil under the roof of good Lord M.

I hate thee heartily!—By my faith I do!—Every hour I hate thee more than the former!—

J. BELFORD.

LETTER LXXXII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Saturday, July 22.

What dost hate me for, Belford?—And why more and more? Have I been guilty of any offence thou knewest not before?—If *pathos* can move such a heart as thine, can it alter facts?—Did I not always do this incomparable creature as much justice as thou canst do her for the heart of thee, or as she can do herself?—What nonsense then thy hatred, thy *augmented* hatred, when I still persist to marry her, pursuant to word given to thee, and to faith plighted to all my relations! But hate, if thou wilt, so thou dost but write. Thou canst not hate me so much as I do myself: and yet I know if thou really hatedst me, thou wouldst not venture to tell me so.

Well, but after all, what need of her history to these women? She will certainly repent, some time hence, that she has thus needlessly exposed us both.

Sickness palls every appetite, and makes us hate what we loved: but renewed health changes the scene; disposes us, to be pleased with ourselves; and then we are in a way to be pleased with every one else. Every hope, then, rises upon us: every hour presents itself to us on dancing feet: and what Mr. Addison says of liberty, may, with still greater propriety, be said of *health* [*for what is liberty itself without health?*]

> It makes the gloomy face of nature gay;
> Gives beauty to the sun, and pleasure to the day.

And I rejoice that she is already so much better, as to hold, with strangers, such a long and interesting conversation.

Strange, confoundedly strange, and as perverse [that is to say, as *womanly*] as strange, that she should refuse, and sooner choose to die [O the obscene word! and yet how free does thy pen make with it to me!] than be mine, who offended her by acting in character, while her parents acted shamefully *out of theirs*, and when I am now willing to act *out of my own* to oblige her; yet *I* not to be forgiven; *they* to be faultless with her!—And marriage the only medium to repair all breaches, and to salve her own honour!—Surely thou must see the inconsistence of her *forgiving* unforgiveness, as I may call it!—Yet, heavy varlet as thou art, thou wantest to be drawn up after her! And what a figure dost thou make with thy speeches, stiff as Hickman's ruffles, with thy aspirations and prostrations!—Unused, thy weak head, to bear the sublimities, that fall even in common conversation, from the lips of this ever charming creature!

But the prettiest whim of all was, to drop the bank note behind her chair, instead of presenting it on thy knees to her hand?—To make such a wo-

man as this *doubly* stoop—by the acceptance, and to take it from the ground!—What an ungrateful *benefit-conferrer* art thou!—How awkward, to take it into thy head, that the best way of making a present to a lady, was to throw the present behind her chair!

I am very desirous to see what she has written to her sister; what she is about to write to Miss Howe; and what return she will have from the Harlowe Arabella. Canst thou not form some scheme to come at the copies of these letters, or at the substance of them at least, and of that of her other correspondences? Mrs. Lovick, thou seemest to say, is a pious woman. The lady, having given such a particular history of herself, will acquaint her with every thing. And art thou not about to reform!—Won't this consent of minds between thee and the widow [what age is she, Jack? The devil never trumpt up a friendship between a man and a woman, of any thing like years, which did not end in matrimony, or in the ruin of their morals! Won't it] strike out an intimacy between ye, that may enable thee to gratify me in this particular? A proselyte, I can tell thee, has great influence upon your good people: such a one is a saint of their own creation: and they will water, and cultivate, and cherish him, as a plant of their own raising: and this from a pride truly spiritual!

One of my loves in Paris was a devotée. She took great pains to convert me. I gave way to her kind endeavours for the good of my soul. She thought it a point gained to make me profess *some* religion. The catholic has its conveniences. I permitted her to bring a *father* to me. My reformation went on swimmingly. The *father* had hopes of me: he applauded her zeal: so did I. And how dost think it ended?—Not a girl in England, read-

ing thus far, but would guess!—In a word, very happily: for she not only brought me a father, but *made* me one: and then, being satisfied with each other's conversion, we took different routes: she into Navarre; I, into Italy: both well inclined to propagate the good lessons in which we had so well instructed each other.

But to return. One consolation arises to me, from the pretty regrets which this admirable creature seems to have in indulging reflections on the people's wedding-day.—*I* ONCE!—thou makest her break off with saying—

She once! What?—O Belford! why didst thou not urge her to explain what she once hoped?

What *once* a woman hopes, in love matters, she *always* hopes, while there is room for hope: and are we not both single? Can she be any man's but mine? Will I be any woman's but hers?

I never will! I never can!—And I tell thee, that I am every day, every hour, more and more in love with her: and, at this instant, have a more vehement passion for her than ever I had in my life!—And that with views absolutely honourable, in *her own sense* of the word: nor have I varied, so much as in *wish*, for this week past; firmly fixed, and wrought into my very nature, as the *life of honour*, or of generous confidence in me, was, in preference to the life of *doubt* and *distrust*. That must be a *life of doubt and distrust*, surely, where the woman confides nothing, and ties up a man for his good behaviour for life, taking church and state sanctions in aid of the obligation she imposes upon him.

I shall go on Monday evening to a kind of ball, to which Colonel Ambrose has invited me. It is given on a family account. I care not on what: for all that delights me in the thing is, that Mrs. and

Miss Howe are to be there;—Hickman, of course; for the old lady will not stir abroad without him. The colonel is in hopes that Miss Arabella Harlowe will be there likewise; for all the men and women of fashion round him are invited.

I fell in by accident with the colonel, who, I believe, hardly thought I would accept of the invitation. But he knows me not, if he thinks I am ashamed to appear at any place, where women dare show their faces. Yet he hinted to me, that my name *was up*, on Miss Harlowe's account. But, to allude to one of Lord M.'s phrases, if it be, I will not *lie a bed* when any thing joyous is going forward.

As I shall go in my lord's chariot, I would have had one of my cousins Montague to go with me: but they both refused: and I shall not choose to take either of thy brethren. It would look as if I thought I wanted a body-guard: besides, one of them is too rough, the other too smooth, and too great a fop for some of the staid company that will be there; and for *me* in particular. Men are known by their companions; and a fop [as Tourville, for example] takes great pains to hang out a sign by his dress of what he has in his shop. Thou, indeed, art an exception; dressing like a coxcomb, yet a very clever fellow. Nevertheless so clumsy a beau, that thou seemest to me to owe thyself a double spite, making thy ungracefulness appear the *more* ungraceful, by thy remarkable tawdriness when thou art out of mourning.

I remember, when I first saw thee, my mind laboured with a strong puzzle, whether I should put thee down for a great fool, or a smatterer in wit. Something I saw was wrong in thee, by thy *dress*. If this fellow, thought I, delights not so much in *ridicule*, that he will not spare *himself*, he must be

plaguy silly to take so much pains to make his ugliness more conspicuous than it would otherwise be.

Plain dress, for an ordinary man or woman, implies at least *modesty*, and always procures kind quarter from the censorious. Who will ridicule a personal imperfection in one that seems conscious, that it *is* an imperfection? *Who ever said, an anchoret was poor?* But who would spare so very absurd a wrong-head, as should bestow tinsel to make his deformity the more conspicuous?

But, although I put on these lively airs, I am sick at my soul!—My whole heart is with my charmer! With what indifference shall I look upon all the assembly at the colonel's, my beloved in my ideal eye, and engrossing my whole heart?

LETTER LXXXIII.

MISS HOWE TO MISS ARABELLA HARLOWE.

MISS HARLOWE, Thursday, July 20.

I CANNOT help acquainting you (however it may be received, coming from *me*) that your poor sister is dangerously ill, at the house of one Smith, who keeps a glover's and perfume-shop, in King Street, Covent Garden. She knows not that I write. Some violent words, in the nature of an imprecation, from her father, afflict her greatly in her weak state. I presume not to direct you what to do in this case. You are her sister. I therefore could not help writing to you, not only for her sake, but for your own. I am, madam,

Your humble servant,

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER LXXXIV.

MISS ARABELLA HARLOWE. IN ANSWER.

MISS HOWE, Thursday, July 20.

I HAVE your's of this morning. All that has happened to the unhappy body you mention, is what we foretold and expected. Let *him*, for whose sake she abandoned us, be her comfort. We are told he has remorse, and would marry her. We don't believe it, indeed. She *may* be very ill. Her disappointment may make her so, or ought. Yet is she the only one I know, who is disappointed.

I cannot say, Miss Howe, that the notification from you is the *more* welcome for the liberties you have been pleased to take with our whole family, for resenting a conduct, that it is a shame any young lady should justify. Excuse this freedom, occasioned by greater. I am, miss,

Your humble servant,
ARABELLA HARLOWE.

LETTER LXXXV.

MISS HOWE. IN REPLY.

MISS ARABELLA HARLOWE, Friday, July 21.

IF you had half as much sense as you have ill-nature, you would (notwithstanding the exuberance of the latter) have been able to distinguish between a kind intention to you all (that you might have the less to reproach yourselves with, if a deplorable case should happen) and an officiousness I owed you not, by reason of freedoms at least reciprocal. I will not, for the *unhappy body's* sake, as you call

a sister you have helped to make so, say all that I *could* say. If what I fear happen, you shall hear (whether desired or not) all the mind of

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER LXXXVI.

MISS ARABELLA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

MISS ANN HOWE, Friday, July 21.

YOUR pert letter I have received. You, that spare nobody, I cannot expect should spare me. You are very happy in a prudent and watchful mother.—But else—mine cannot be exceeded in prudence: but we had all too good an opinion of somebody, to think watchfulness needful. There may possibly be some reason why *you* are so much attached to her in an error of this flagrant nature.

I help to make a sister unhappy!—It is false, Miss Howe!—It is all her own doings!—Except, indeed, what she may owe to somebody's advice—you know who can best answer for that.

Let us *know your mind* as soon as you please: as we shall know it to be *your* mind, we shall judge what attention to give it. That's all, from, &c.

AR. H.

LETTER LXXXVII.

MISS HOWE TO MISS ARABELLA HARLOWE.

Sat. July 22.

IT may be the *misfortune* of some people to engage *every* body's notice: others may be the *happier*, though they may be the more *envious*, for nobody's

thinking them worthy of any. But one would be glad people had the sense to be thankful for that want of consequence, which subjected them not to hazards they would hardly have been able to manage under.

I own to you, that had it not been for the prudent advice of that admirable somebody, (whose principal fault is the superiority of her talents, and whose misfortune to be brothered and sistered by a couple of creatures, who are not able to comprehend her excellences) I might at one time have been plunged into difficulties. But, pert as the superlatively pert may think me, I thought not myself *wiser*, because I was *older* ; nor for that *poor* reason qualified to prescribe to, much less to maltreat, a genius so superior.

I repeat it with gratitude, that the dear creature's advice was of very great service to me—and this before my mother's *watchfulness* became necessary. But how it would have fared with me, I cannot say, had I had a brother or sister, who had deemed it their *interest*, as well as a gratification of their *sordid envy*, to misrepresent me.

Your admirable sister, in effect, saved *you*, Miss Harlowe, as well as *me*—with this difference—you, *against* your will—me, *with* mine : and but for *your* own brother, and *his* own sister, would not have been lost herself.

Would to heaven both sisters had been obliged with their own wills!—The most admirable of her sex would never then have been out of her father's house!—*You*, madam, I don't know what had become of *you*.—But, let what would have happened, you would have met with the humanity you have not shown, whether you had deserved it or not:—nor, at worst, lost either a kind sister, or a pitying friend, in the most excellent of sisters.

But why run I into length to such a poor thing?—Why push I so weak an adversary? whose first letter is all low malice, and whose next is made up of falsehood and inconsistence, as well as spite and ill-manners! Yet I was willing to give you a *part* of my mind. Call for more of it; it shall be at your service: from one, who, though she thanks God she is not your *sister,* is not your *enemy:* but that she is *not* the latter, is withheld but by two considerations; one that you bear, though unworthily, a relation to a sister so excellent; the other, that you are not of consequence enough to engage any thing but the pity and contempt of

A. H.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

MRS. HARLOWE TO MRS. HOWE.

Sat. July 22.

DEAR MADAM,

I SEND you, inclosed, copies of five letters that have passed between Miss Howe and my Arabella. You are a person of so much prudence and good sense, and (being a mother yourself) can so well enter into the distresses of all our family, upon the rashness and ingratitude of a child we once doated upon, that, I dare say, you will not countenance the strange freedoms your daughter has taken with us all. These are not the only ones we have to complain of; but we were silent on the others, as they did not, as these have done, spread themselves out upon paper. We only beg, that we may not be reflected upon by a young lady, who knows not what we have suffered, and do suffer, by the rashness of a naughty creature who has brought ruin upon herself, and disgrace upon a family which

she has robbed of all comfort. I offer not to prescribe to your known wisdom in this case; but leave it to you to do as you think most proper. I am, madam,

Your most humble servant,

CHARL. HARLOWE.

LETTER LXXXIX.

MRS. HOWE. IN ANSWER.

DEAR MADAM, Sat. July 22.

I AM highly offended with my daughter's letters to Miss Harlowe. I knew nothing at all of her having taken such a liberty. These young creatures have such romantic notions, some of *love*, some of *friendship*, that there is no governing them in either. Nothing but time, and dear experience, will convince them of their absurdities in both. I have chidden Miss Howe very severely. I had before so just a notion of what your whole family's distress must be, that, as I told your brother, Mr. Antony Harlowe, I had often forbid her corresponding with the poor fallen angel—for surely never did young lady more resemble what we imagine of angels, both in person and mind. But, tired out with her headstrong ways, [I am sorry to say this of my own child] I was forced to give way to it again. And, indeed, so sturdy was she in her will, that I was afraid it would end in a fit of sickness, as too often it did in fits of sullenness.

None but parents know the trouble that children give. They are happiest, I have often thought, who have none. And these woman-grown girls, bless my heart! how ungovernable!

I believe, however, you will have no more such

letters from my Nancy. I have been forced to use compulsion with her, upon Miss Clary's illness, [and it seems, she is very bad] or she would have run away to London, to attend upon her: and this she calls doing the duty of a friend; forgetting, that she sacrifices to her romantic friendship her duty to her fond indulgent mother.

There are a thousand excellences in the poor sufferer, notwithstanding her fault: and, if the hints she has given to my daughter be true, she has been most grievously abused. But I think your forgiveness and her father's forgiveness of her ought to be all at your own choice; and nobody should intermeddle in that, for the sake of due authority in parents: and besides, as Miss Harlowe writes, it was what every body expected, though Miss Clary would not believe it, till she smarted for her credulity. And, for these reasons, I offer not to plead any thing in alleviation of her fault, which is aggravated by her admirable sense, and a judgment above her years.

I am, madam, with compliments to good Mr. Harlowe, and all your afflicted family,

Your most humble servant,

ANNABELLA HOWE.

I shall set out for the Isle of Wight in a few days, with my daughter. I will hasten our setting out, on purpose to break her mind from her friend's distresses; which afflict us as much nearly, as Miss Clary's rashness has done you.

LETTER XC.

MISS HOWE TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

MY DEAREST FRIEND, Sat. July 22.

We are busy in preparing for our little journey and voyage: but I will be ill, I will be very ill, if I cannot hear you are better before I go.

Rogers greatly afflicted me, by telling me the bad way you are in. But now you have been able to hold a pen, and as your sense is strong and clear, I hope that the amusement you will receive from writing will make you better.

I dispatch this by an extraordinary way, that it may reach you time enough to move you to *consider well* before you absolutely decide upon the contents of mine of the 13th, on the subject of the two Miss Montague's visit to me; since, according to what you write, must I answer them.

In your last, you conclude very positively, that you will not be his. To be sure, he rather deserves an infamous death, than such a wife. But, as I really believe him innocent of the arrest, and as all his family are such earnest pleaders, and will be guarantees, for him, I think the compliance with *their* intreaties, and *his own*, will be now the best step you can take; your own family remaining implacable, as I *can assure you they do*. He is a man of sense; and it is not impossible but he may make you a good husband, and in time may become no bad man.

My mother is entirely of my opinion: and on Friday, pursuant to a hint I gave you in my last, Mr. Hickman had a conference with the strange wretch: and though he liked not, by any means, his behaviour to himself: nor, indeed, had reason to do so;

yet he is of opinion, that he is sincerely determined to marry you, if you will condescend to have him.

Perhaps Mr. Hickman may make you a private visit before we set out. If I may not attend you myself, I shall not be easy, except he does. And he will then give you an account of the admirable character the surprising wretch gave of you, and of the justice he does to your virtue.

He was as acknowledging to his relations, though to his own condemnation, as his two cousins told me. All that he apprehends, as he said to Mr. Hickman, is, that if you go on exposing *him*, wedlock itself will not wipe off the dishonour to both: and moreover, 'that you would ruin your constitution by your immoderate sorrow; and, by seeking death when you might avoid it, would not be able to escape it when you would wish to do so.'

So, my dearest friend, I charge you, if you *can*, to get over your averson to this vile man. You may yet live to see many happy days, and be once more the delight of all your friends, neighbours, and acquaintance, as well as a stay, a comfort, and a blessing, to your Anna Howe.

I long to have your answer to mine of the 13th. Pray keep the messenger till it be ready. If he return on Monday night, it will be time enough for his affairs, and to find me come back from Colonel Ambrose's, who gives a ball on the anniversary of Mrs. Ambrose's birth and marriage both in one. The gentry all round the neighbourhood are invited this time, on some good news they have received from Mrs. Ambrose's brother, the governor.

My mother promised the colonel for me and herself, in my absence. I would fain have excused myself to her; and the rather, as I had exceptions

on account of the day *: but she is almost as young as her daughter; and thinking it not so well to go without me, she told me, she could propose *nothing* that was agreeable to me. And having had a *few sparring blows* with each other very lately, I think I must comply. For I don't love jangling when I can help it; though I seldom make it my study to avoid the occasion, when it offers of itself. I don't know, if either were not a little afraid of the other, whether it would be possible that we could live together:—I, *all my father!*—My mamma—what?—*All my mother*—what else should I say?

O my dear, how many things happen in this life to give us displeasure! How few to give us joy!—I am sure I shall have none on this occasion; since the true partner of my heart, the principal half of the *one soul*, that it used to be said, animated *the pair of friends*, as we were called: you, my dear, [who used to irradiate every circle you set your foot into, and to give me *real* significance in a *second* place to yourself] cannot be there!—One hour of your company, my ever instructive friend, [I thirst for it!] how infinitely preferable would it be to me, to all the diversions and amusements with which our sex are generally most delighted—Adieu, my dear!—

A. HOWE.

LETTER XCI.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Sunday, July 23.

WHAT pain, my dearest friend, does your kind solicitude for my welfare give me! How much more binding and tender are the ties of pure friendship,

* The 24th of July, Miss Clarissa Harlowe's birth-day.

and the union of like minds, than the ties of nature! Well might the sweet singer of Israel, when he was carrying to the utmost extent the praises of the friendship between him and his beloved friend, say, that the love of Jonathan to him was wonderful; that it surpassed the *love of women!* What an exalted idea does it give of the soul of Jonathan, sweetly attempered for the sacred band, if we may suppose it but equal to that of my Anna Howe for her fallen Clarissa!—But, although I can glory in your kind love for me, think, my dear, what concern must fill a mind, not ungenerous, when the obligation lies all *on one side.* And when, at the same time that your light is the brighter for my darkness, I must give pain to a dear friend, to whom I delighted to give pleasure; and not pain only, but discredit, for supporting my blighted fame against the busy tongues of uncharitable censurers!

This it is that makes me, in the words of my admired exclaimer, very little altered, often repeat: 'O! that I were as in months past! as in the days when God preserved me! When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness! As I was in the days of my *childhood*—when the Almighty was yet with me; when *I was in my father's house:* when I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil.'

You set before me your reasons, enforced by the opinion of your honoured mother, why I should think of Mr. Lovelace for a husband *.

And I have before me your letter of the 13th †, containing the account of the visit and proposals, and kind interposition of the two Miss Montagues;

* See the preceding letter. † See letter lix.

in the names of the good Ladies Sarah Sadleir and Betty Lawrance, and in that of Lord M.

Also yours of the 18th *, *demanding* me, as I may say, of those ladies, and of that family, when I was so infamously and cruelly arrested, and you knew not what was become of me.

The answer likewise of those ladies, signed in so full and so generous a manner by themselves †, and by that nobleman, and those two venerable ladies; and, in his light way, by the wretch himself.

These, my dearest Miss Howe; and your letter of the 16th ‡, which came when I was under arrest, and which I received not till some days after;

Are all before me.

' And I have as well weighed the whole matter, and your arguments in support of your advice, as at present my head and my heart will let me weigh them.

I am, moreover, willing to believe, not only from your own opinion, but from the assurances of one of Mr. Lovelace's friends, Mr. Belford, a good-natured and humane man, who spares not to censure the author of my calamities (*I think*, with undissembled and undesigning sincerity) that that man is innocent of the disgraceful arrest:

And even, if you please, in sincere compliment to your opinion, and to that of Mr. Hickman, that (over-persuaded by his friends, and ashamed of his unmerited baseness to me) he would in earnest marry *me*, if I would have *him*.

' ‖ Well, and now, what is the result of all?—

* See letter lxi. † See letter lxiv. ‡ See letter lx.

‖ Those parts of this letter which are marked with inverted commas [thus '] were afterwards transcribed by Miss Howe in letter iv. of Vol. VII. written to the ladies of Mr. Lovelace's family; and are thus distinguished to avoid the necessity of repeating them in that letter.

It is this—that I must abide by what I have already declared—and that is [don't be angry at me, my best friend] that I have much more pleasure in thinking of death, than of such a husband. In short, as I declared in my last, that I cannot [forgive me, if I say, I *will* not] ever be his.

'But you will expect my reasons: I know you will: and if I give them not, will conclude me either obstinate, or implacable, or both: and those would be sad imputations, if just, to be laid to the charge of a person who thinks and talks of *dying*. And yet, to say that resentment and disappointment have no part in my determination, would be saying a thing hardly to be credited. For I own I *have* resentments, strong resentments, but not unreasonable ones, as you will be convinced, if already you are not so, when you know all my story—if ever you do know it—for I begin to fear (so many things more necessary to be thought of, than either this man or my own vindication, have I to do) that I shall not have time to compass what I have intended, and, in a manner, promised you *.

'I have one reason to give in support of my resolution, that, I believe yourself will allow of: but having owned that I have resentments, I will begin with those considerations, in which anger and disappointment have too great a share: in hopes, that having once disburdened my mind upon paper, and to my Anna Howe, of those corroding uneasy passions, I shall prevent them for ever from returning to my heart, and to have their place supplied by better, milder, and more agreeable ones.

'My pride, then, my dearest friend, although a great deal mortified, is not *sufficiently* mortified, if it be necessary for me to submit to make that man

* See p. 202.

my choice, whose actions are, and ought to be, my abhorrence!—What!—Shall I, who have been treated with such premeditated and perfidious barbarity, as is painful to be thought of, and cannot with modesty be described, think of taking the violator to my heart? Can I vow duty to one so wicked, and hazard my salvation by joining myself to so great a profligate, now I *know* him to be so? Do you think your Clarissa Harlowe so lost, so *sunk*, at least, as that she could, for the sake of patching up, in the world's eye, a broken reputation, meanly appear indebted to the generosity, or perhaps *compassion*, of a man, who has, by means so inhuman, robbed her of it? Indeed, my dear, I should not ‘think my penitence for the rash step I took, any thing better than a specious delusion, if I had not got above the least wish to have Mr. Lovelace for my husband.

‘Yes, I warrant, I must *creep* to the violator, and be thankful to him for doing me poor justice!

‘Do you not already see me (pursuing the advice you give) with a downcast eye, appear before *his* friends, and before *my own*, (supposing the latter would at last condescend to own me) divested of that *noble confidence*, which arises from a mind unconscious of having deserved reproach?

‘Do you not see me creep about mine own house, preferring all my honest maidens to myself—as if afraid, too, to open my lips, either by way of reproof or admonition, lest their bolder eyes should bid me look inward, and not expect perfection from *them*?

‘And shall I entitle the wretch to upbraid me with his generosity, and his pity; and perhaps to reproach me, for having been *capable* of forgiving crimes of *such* a nature?

‘I once indeed hoped, little thinking him so *pre-*

meditatedly vile a man, that I might have the happiness to reclaim him: I vainly believed, that he loved me well enough to suffer my advice for his good, and the example I humbly presumed I should be enabled to set him, to have weight with him; and the rather, as he had no mean opinion of my morals and understanding: but now, what hope is there left for this my *prime* hope?—*Were* I to marry him, what a figure should I make, preaching virtue and morality to a man whom I had trusted with opportunities to seduce me from all my own duties?—And then, supposing I were to have children by such a husband, must it not, think you, cut a thoughtful person to the heart, to look round upon her little family, and think she had given them a father destined, without a miracle, to perdition; and whose immoralities, propagated among them by his vile example, might, too probably, bring down a curse upon them? And, after all, who knows but that my own sinful compliances with a man, who would think himself entitled to my obedience, might taint my own morals, and make me, instead of a reformer, an imitator of him?—For who *can touch pitch, and not be defiled?*

'Let me then repeat, that I truly despise this man! If I know my own heart, indeed I do!—I pity him! *Beneath* my very pity as he is, I nevertheless pity him!—But this I could not do, if I still loved him: for, my dear, one must be greatly sensible of the baseness and ingratitude of those we love. I love him not, therefore! My soul disdains communion with him.

'But although thus much is due to resentment, yet have I not been so far carried away by its angry effects, as to be rendered incapable of casting about what I *ought* to do, and what *could be done*, if the

Almighty, in order to lengthen the time of my penitence, were to bid me to live.

'The single life, at such times, has offered to me, as the life, the *only* life, to be chosen. But in *that*, must I not *now* sit brooding over my past afflictions, and mourning my faults till the hour of my release? And would not every one be able to assign the reason, why Clarissa Harlowe chose solitude, and to sequester herself from the world? Would not the look of every creature, who beheld me, appear as a reproach to me? And would not my conscious eye confess my fault, whether the eyes of others accused me or not? One of my delights was, to enter the cots of my poor neighbours, to leave lessons to the boys, and cautions to the elder girls: and how should I be able, unconscious, and without pain, to say to the latter, fly the delusions of men, who had been supposed to have run away with one?

'What then, my dear and only friend, can I wish for but death?—And what, after all, *is* death? 'Tis but a cessation from mortal life: 'tis but the finishing of an appointed course: the refreshing inn after a fatiguing journey: the end of a life of cares and troubles; and if happy, the beginning of a life of immortal happiness.

'If I die not now, it may possibly happen, that I may be taken when I am less prepared. Had I escaped the evils I labour under, it might have been in the midst of some gay promising hope; when my heart had beat high with the desire of life; and when the vanity of this earth had taken hold of me.

'But now, my dear, for *your* satisfaction let me say, that although I wish not for life, yet would I not, like a poor coward, desert my post when I

can maintain it, and when it is my *duty* to maintain it.

'More than once, indeed, was I urged by thoughts so sinful: but then it was in the height of my distress: and once, particularly, I have reason to believe, I saved myself by my *desperation* from the most shocking personal insults; from a repetition, as far as I know, of his vileness; the base women (with so much reason dreaded by me) present, to intimidate *me*, if not to assist *him*!—O my dear, you know not what I suffered on that occasion!—Nor do I what I escaped at the time, if the wicked man had approached me to execute the horrid purposes of his vile heart.'

As I am of opinion, that it would have manifested more of revenge and despair, than of principle, had I committed a violence upon myself, when the villany was *perpetrated*; so I should think it equally criminal, were I now *wilfully* to neglect myself; were I *purposely* to run into the arms of death, (*as that man supposes I shall do*) when I might avoid it.

Nor, my dear, whatever are the suppositions of such a short-sighted, such a low-souled man, must you impute to gloom, to melancholy, to despondency, nor yet to a spirit of faulty pride, or still *more* faulty revenge, the resolution I have taken never to marry *this*; and if not *this*, *any* man. So far from deserving this imputation, I do assure you, (my dear and *only* love) that I will do every thing I can to prolong my life, till God, in mercy to me, shall be pleased to call for it. I have reason to think my punishment is but the due consequence of my fault, and I will not run away from it; but beg of heaven to sanctify it to me. When appetite serves, I will eat and drink what is sufficient to support nature. A very little, you know, will do

for that. And whatever my physicians shall think fit to prescribe, I will take, though ever so disagreeable. In short, I will do every thing I can do, to convince all my friends, who hereafter may think it worth their while to inquire after my last behaviour, that I possessed my soul with tolerable patience; and endeavoured to bear with a lot of my own drawing: for thus, in humble imitation of the sublimest exemplar, I often say:—Lord, it is thy will; and it shall be mine. Thou art just in all thy dealings with the children of men; and I know thou wilt not afflict me beyond what I can bear: and, if I *can* bear it, I *ought* to bear it; and (thy grace assisting me) I *will* bear it.

'But here, my dear, is another reason; a reason that will convince you yourself, that I ought not to think of wedlock; but of a preparation for a quite different event. I am persuaded, as much as that I am now alive, that I shall not long live. The strong sense I have ever had of my fault, the loss of my reputation, my disappointments, the determined resentment of my friends, *aiding* the barbarous usage I have met with where I least deserved it, have seized upon my heart: seized upon it, before it was so well fortified by *religious considerations* as I hope it now is. Don't be concerned, my dear—but I am sure, if I may say it with as little presumption as grief, that God will soon *dissolve my substance; and bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.*'

And now, my dearest friend, you know all my mind. And you will be pleased to write to the ladies of Mr. Lovelace's family, that I think myself infinitely obliged to them, for their good opinion of me; and that it has given me greater pleasure than I thought I had to come in this life, that, upon the little knowledge they have of me, and that not

personal, I was thought worthy (after the ill usage I have received) of an alliance with their honourable family: but, that I can by no means think of their kinsman for a husband: and do you, my dear, extract from the above, such reasons as you think have any weight in them.

I would write myself to acknowledge their favour, had I not more employment for my head, my heart, and my fingers, than I doubt they will be able to go through.

I should be glad to know when you set out on your journey; as also your little stages; and your time of stay at your aunt Harman's; that my prayers may *locally* attend you, whithersoever you go, and wherever you are.

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XCII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Sunday, July 23.

THE letter accompanying this being upon a very particular subject, I would not embarrass it, as I may say, with any other. And yet having some further matters upon my mind, which will want your excuse for directing them to you, I hope the following lines will *have* that excuse.

My good Mrs. Norton, so long ago as in a letter dated the 3d of this month *, hinted to me that my relations took amiss some severe things you were pleased, in love to me, to say of them. Mrs. Norton mentioned it with that respectful love which she bears to my dearest friend: but wished, for *my*

* See p. 145.

sake, that you would rein in a vivacity, which, on most other occasions, so charmingly becomes you. This was her sense. You know that *I* am warranted to speak and write freer to my Anna Howe, than Mrs. Norton would do.

I durst not mention it to you at that time, because appearances were so strong against me, on Mr. Lovelace's getting me again into his powers (after my escape to Hampstead) as made you very angry with me when you answered mine on my second escape. And, soon afterwards, I was put under that barbarous arrest: so that I could not well touch upon that subject till now.

Now, therefore, my dearest Miss Howe, let me *repeat* my earnest request (for this is not the first time by several that I have been obliged to chide you on this occasion), that you will spare my parents, and other relations, in all your conversations about me.—Indeed, I wish they had thought fit to take other measures with me: but who shall judge for them?—The event has justified them, and condemned me.—They expected nothing good of this vile man; *he* has not, therefore, deceived *them*: but they expected other things from *me*; and *I* have. And they have the more reason to be set against me, if (as my aunt Hervey wrote * formerly) they intended not to force my inclinations, in favour of Mr. Solmes; and if they believe, that my going off was the effect of choice and premeditation.

I have no desire to be received to favour by them: for why should I wish for what I have no reason to expect?—Besides, I could not look them in the face, if they *would* receive me. Indeed I could not. All I have to hope for, is, first, that my father will absolve me from his heavy malediction: and next,

* See Vol. III. p. 273.

for a last blessing. The obtaining of these favours are needful to my peace of mind.

I have written to my sister; but have only mentioned the absolution.

I am afraid, I shall receive a very harsh answer from her: my fault, in the eyes of my family, is of so enormous a nature, that my *first* application will hardly be encouraged. Then they know not (nor perhaps will believe) that I am so very ill as I am. So that, were I actually to die before they could have time to take the necessary informations, you must not blame them too severely. You must call it a fatality. I know not what you must call it: for, alas! I have made them as miserable as I am myself. And yet sometimes I think, that, were they cheerfully to pronounce me forgiven, I know not whether my concern for having offended them would not be augmented: since I imagine, that nothing can be more wounding to a spirit not ungenerous, than a *generous forgiveness.*

I hope your mother will permit our correspondence for *one* month more, although I do not take her advice as to having this man. Only for *one* month. I will not desire it longer. When catastrophes are winding up, what changes (changes that make one's heart shudder to think of) may *one* short month produce!—But if she will not—why then, my dear, it becomes us both to acquiesce.

You can't think what my apprehensions would have been, had I known Mr. Hickman was to have had a meeting (on such a questioning occasion as must have been his errand from you) with that haughty and uncontrolable man.

You give me hope of a visit from Mr. Hickman: let him *expect* to see me greatly altered. I know he loves me: for he loves every one whom you love. A painful interview, I doubt! But I shall be glad to

see a man, whom *you* will one day, and that on an *early* day, I hope, make happy; and whose gentle manners, and unbounded love for you, will make *you* so, if it be not your own fault.

I am, my dearest, kindest friend, the sweet companion of my happy hours, the friend ever dearest and nearest to my fond heart,

Your equally obliged and faithful

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XCIII.

MRS. NORTON TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Monday, July 24.

EXCUSE, my dearest young lady, my long silence. I have been extremely ill. My poor boy has also been at death's door; and, when I hoped that he was better, he has relapsed. Alas! my dear, he is very dangerously ill. Let us both have your prayers!

Very angry letters have passed between your sister and Miss Howe. Every one of your family is incensed against that young lady. I wish you would remonstrate against her warmth; since it can do no good; for they will not believe, but that her interposition has your connivance; nor that you are so ill as Miss Howe assures them you are.

Before she wrote, they were going to send up young Mr. Brand the clergyman, to make private inquiries of your health, and way of life.—But now they are so exasperated, that they have laid aside their intention.

We have flying reports here, and at Harlowe Place, of some fresh insults which you have undergone: and that you are about to put yourself into

Lady Betty Lawrance's protection. I believe they would now be glad (as I should be) that you would do so; and this, perhaps, will make them suspend, for the present, any determination in your favour.

How unhappy am I, that the dangerous way my son is in prevents my attendance on you! Let me beg of you to write me word how you are, both as to person and mind. A servant of Sir Robert Beachcroft, who rides post on his master's business to town, will present you with this: and, perhaps, will bring me the favour of a few lines in return. He will be obliged to stay in town several hours, for an answer to his dispatches.

This is the anniversary, that used to give joy to as many as had the pleasure and honour of knowing you. May the Almighty bless you, and grant, that it may be the only unhappy one that may be ever known by you, my dearest young lady; and by

Your ever affectionate

JUDITH NORTON.

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II. LOVELACE *to Belford.* The lady gives a promissory note to Dorcas, to induce her to further her escape.—A fair trial of skill now, he says. A conversation between the vile Dorcas and her lady: in which she engages her lady's pity. The bonds of wickedness stronger than the ties of virtue. Observations on that subject.

III. IV. V. *From the same.* A new contrivance to take advantage of the lady's intended escape.——A letter from Tomlinson. Intent of it.——He goes out to give opportunity for the lady to attempt an escape. His design frustrated.

VI. *From the same.* An interesting conversation between the lady and him. No concession in his favour. *By his soul,* he swears, *this dear girl gives the lie to all their rakish maxims.* He has laid all the sex under obligation to him; and why.

VII. *From the same.* Lord M. in extreme danger. The family desire his presence. He intercepts a severe letter from Miss Howe to her friend. Copy of it.

VIII. *From the same.* The lady, suspecting Dorcas, tries to prevail upon *him* to give her her liberty. She disclaims vengeance, and affectingly tells him all her future views. Denied, she once more attempts an escape. Prevented, and terrified with apprehension of instant dishonour, she is obliged to make some concession.

IX. *From the same.* Accuses her of explaining away her concession. Made desperate, he seeks occasion to quarrel with her. She exerts a spirit which overawes him. He is ridiculed by the infamous co-partnerhip. Calls to Belford to help a *gay heart* to a little of the *dismal,* on the expected death of Lord M.

X. *From the same.* Another message from M. Hall, to engage him to go down next morning. No concession yet from the lady.

XI. XII. *From the same.* The women's instigations. His further schemes against the lady. *What,* he asks, *is the injury which a church-rite will not at any time repair?*

XIII. *From the same.* Himself, the mother, her nymphs, all assembled with intent to execute his detestable purposes. Her glorious behaviour on the occasion. He execrates, detests, and despises himself; and admires her more than ever. Obliged to set out early that morning for M. Hall, he will press her with letters to meet him next Thursday, her uncle's birth-day, at the altar.

XIV. XV. XVI. *Lovelace to Clarissa, from M. Hall.* Urging her accordingly, (the licence in her hands) by the most engaging pleas and arguments.

XVII. *Lovelace to Belford.* Begs he will wait on the lady, and induce her to write but four words to him, signifying the church and the day. Is now resolved on wedlock. Curses his plots and contrivances; which all end, he says, in one grand plot upon himself.

XVIII. *Belford to Lovelace, in answer.* Refuses to undertake for him, unless he can be sure of his honour. Why he doubts it.

XIX. *Lovelace in reply.* Curses him for his scrupulousness. Is in earnest to marry. After one more letter of entreaty to her, if she keep sullen silence, she must take the consequence.

XX. *Lovelace to Clarissa.* Once more earnestly entreats her to meet him at the altar. Not to be *forbidden* coming, he will take for *leave* to come.

XXI. *Lovelace to Patrick M'Donald.* Ordering him to visit the lady, and instructing him what to say, and how to behave to her.

XXII. *To the same, as Captain Tomlinson.* Calculated to be shown to the lady, as in confidence.

XXIII. *M'Donald to Lovelace.* Goes to attend the lady according to direction. Finds the house in an uproar; and the lady escaped.

XXIV. *Mowbray to Lovelace.* With the same news.

XXV. *Belford to Lovelace.* Ample particulars of the lady's escape. Makes serious reflections on the distress she must be in; and on his (Lovelace's) ungrateful usage of her. What he takes to be the sum of religion.

XXVI. *Lovelace to Belford.* Runs into affected levity and ridicule, yet at last owns all his gaiety but counterfeit. Regrets his baseness to the lady. Inveighs against the women for their instigations. Will still marry her, if she

can be found out. One misfortune seldom comes alone; Lord M. is recovering. He had bespoken mourning for him.

XXVII. *Clarissa to Miss Howe.* Writes with incoherence, to inquire after her health. Lets her know whither to direct to her. But forgets in her rambling, her private address. By which means her letter falls into the hands of Miss Howe's mother.

XXVIII. *Mistress Howe to Clarissa.* Reproaches her for making all her friends unhappy. Forbids her to write any more to her daughter.

XXIX. *Clarissa's meek reply.*

XXX. *Clarissa to Hannah Burton.*

XXXI. *Hannah Burton in answer.*

XXXII. *Clarissa to Mrs. Norton.* Excuses her long silence. Asks her a question, with a view to detect Lovelace. Hints at his ungrateful villany. Self-recriminations.

XXXIII. *Mrs. Norton to Clarissa.* Answers her question. Inveighs against Lovelace. Hopes she has escaped with her honour. Consoles her by a brief relation of her own case, and from motives truly pious.

XXXIV. *Clarissa to Lady Betty Lawrance.* Requests an answer to three questions, with a view further to detect Lovelace.

XXXV. *Lady Betty to Clarissa.* Answers her questions. In the kindest manner offers to mediate between her nephew and her.

XXXVI. XXXVII. *Clarissa to Mrs. Hodges,* her uncle Harlowe's housekeeper; with a view of still further detecting Lovelace.——Mrs. Hodge's answer.

XXXVIII. *Clarissa to Lady Betty Lawrance.* Acquaints her with her nephew's baseness. Charitably wishes his reformation; but utterly, and from principle, rejects him.

XXXIX. *Clarissa to Mrs. Norton.* Is comforted by her kind soothings. Wishes she had been her child. Will not allow her to come up to her. Why. Some account of the people she is with; and of a worthy woman, Mrs. Lovick, who lodges in the house. Briefly hints to her the vile usage she has received from Lovelace.

XL. *Mrs. Norton to Clarissa.* Inveighs against Lovelace. Wishes Miss Howe might be induced to refrain from freedoms that do hurt, and can do no good. Further piously consoles her.

XLI. *Clarissa to Mrs. Norton.* A new trouble. An angry letter from Miss Howe; the occasion. Her heart is broken. Shall be uneasy, till she can get her father's curse revoked.

Casts about to whom she can apply for this purpose. Last resolves to write to her sister to beg her mediation.

XLII. *Miss Howe to Clarissa.* Her angry and reproachful letter above-mentioned; demands from her the clearing up of her conduct.

XLIII. *Clarissa to Miss Howe.* Gently remonstrates upon her severity. To this hour knows not all the methods taken to deceive and ruin her. But will briefly, yet circumstantially, enter into the darker part of her sad story, though her heart sinks under the thoughts of a recollection so painful.

XLIV. XLV. XLVI. XLVII. She gives the promised particulars of her story. Begs that the blackest parts of it may be kept secret. And why. Desires one friendly tear, and no more, may be dropped from her gentle eye, on the happy day that shall shut up all her sorrows.

XLVIII. XLIX. *Miss Howe to Clarissa.* Execrates the abandoned profligate. *She must*, she tells her, *look to a world beyond this for her reward.* Unravels some of Lovelace's plots; and detects his forgeries. *Is apprehensive for her own*, as well as Clarissa's *safety.* Advises her to pursue a legal vengeance. Laudable custom in the Isle of Man. Offers personally to attend her in a court of justice.

L. *Clarissa to Miss Howe.* Cannot consent to a prosecution. Discovers who it was that personated her at Hampstead. She is quite sick of life, and of an earth in which innocent and benevolent spirits are sure to be considered as aliens.

LI. *Miss Howe to Clarissa.* Beseeches her to take comfort, and not despair. *Is dreadfully apprehensive of her own safety from Mr. Lovelace.* An instruction to mothers.

LII. *Clarissa to Miss Howe.* Averse as she is to appear in a a court of justice against Lovelace, she will consent to prosecute him, rather than Miss Howe shall live in terror. Hopes she shall not despair; but doubts not, *from so many concurrent circumstances*, that the blow is given.

LIII. LIV. *Lovelace to Belford.* Has no subject worth writing upon, now he has lost his Clarissa. Half in jest, half in earnest, [*as usual with him when vexed or disappointed*] he deplores the loss of her.—Humorous account of Lord M., of himself, and of his two cousins Montague. His Clarissa has made him eyeless and senseless to every other beauty.

LV. LVI. LVII. LVIII. *From the same.* Lady Sarah Sadleir and Lady Betty Lawrance arrive, and engage Lord M. and his two cousins Montague against him, on account

of his treatment of the lady. His trial, as he calls it.—After many altercations, they obtain his consent, that his two cousins should endeavour to engage Miss Howe to prevail upon Clarissa to accept of him, on his unfeigned repentance. It is some pleasure to him, he however rakishly reflects, to observe *how placable the ladies of his family would have been, had they met with a Lovelace.*—MARRIAGE, says he, *with these women is an atonement for the worst we can do them: a true dramatic recompense.* He makes several other whimsical, but characteristic observations, some of which may serve as cautions and warnings to the sex.

LIX. *Miss Howe to Clarissa.* Has had a visit from the two Miss Montague's. Their errand Advises her to marry Lovelace. Reasons for her advice.

LX. *From the same.* Chides her with friendly impatience for not answering her letter. Re-urges her to marry Lovelace, and instantly to put herself under Lady Betty's protection.

LXI. *Miss Howe to Miss Montague.* In the phrensy of her soul, writes to her to demand news of her beloved friend, spirited away, as she apprehends, by the base arts of the blackest of men.

LXII. *Lovelace to Belford.* The suffering innocent arrested and confined, by the execrable woman, in a sham action. He curses himself, and all his plots and contrivances. Conjures him to fly to her, and clear him of this low, this dirty villany; to set her free without conditions; and assure her, that he will never molest her more. Horribly execrates the diabolical women, who thought to make themselves a merit with him by this abominable insult.

LXIII. LXIV. *Miss Montague to Miss Howe,* with the particulars of all that has happened to the lady.—Mr. Lovelace the most miserable of men. Reflections on libertines. She, her sister, Lady Betty, Lady Sarah, Lord M. and Lovelace himself, all sign letters to Miss Howe, asserting his innocence of this horrid insult, and imploring her continued interest in *his* and *their* favour with Clarissa.

LXV. *Belford to Lovelace.* Particulars of the vile arrest. Insolent visits of the wicked women to her. Her unexampled meekness and patience. Her fortitude. He admires it, and prefers it to the false courage of men of their class.

LXVI. *From the same.* Goes to the officer's house. A description of the horrid prison-room, and of the suffering lady on her knees in one corner of it. Her great and mov-

ing behaviour. Breaks off, and sends away his letter, on purpose to harrass him by suspense.

LXVII. *Lovelace to Belford.* Curses him for his tormenting abruption. Clarissa never suffered half what he suffers. That sex made to bear pain. Conjures him to hasten to him the rest of his soul-harrowing intelligence.

LXVIII. *Belford to Lovelace.* His further proceedings. The lady returns to her lodgings at Smith's. Distinction between revenge and resentment in her character. Sends her from the vile women, all her apparel, as Lovelace had desired.

LXIX. *From the same.* Rejoices to find he can *feel.* Will endeavour from time to time to add to his remorse. Insists upon his promise not to molest the lady.

LXX. *From the same.* Describes her lodgings, and gives character of the people, and of the good widow Lovick. She is so ill, that they provide her an honest nurse, and send for Mr. Goddard, a worthy apothecary. Substance of a letter to Miss Howe, dictated by the lady.

LXXI. *From the same.* Admitted to the lady's presence. What passed on the occasion. Really believes, that she still loves him. Has a reverence, and even a holy love for her. Astonished that Lovelace could hold his purposes against such an angel of a woman. Condemns himself for not timely exerting himself to save her.

LXXII. *From the same.* Dr. H. called in. Not having a single guinea to give him, she accepts of three from Mrs. Lovick on a diamond ring. Her dutiful reasons for admitting the doctor's visit. His engaging and gentlemanly behaviour. She resolves to part with some of her richest apparel. Her reasons.

LXXIII. *Lovelace to Belford.* Raves at him. For what. Rallies him, with his usual gaiety, on several passages in his letters. Reasons why Clarissa's heart cannot be broken by what she has suffered. Passionate girls easily subdued. Sedate ones hardly ever pardon. He has some retrograde motions: yet is in earnest to marry Clarissa. Gravely concludes, that *a person intending to marry should never be a rake.* His gay resolutions. Renews, however, his promises not to molest her. A charming encouragement for a man of intrigue, *when a woman is known not to love her husband.* Advantages which men have over women, when disappointed in love. He knows she will permit him to make her amends, after she has plagued him heartily.

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LXXV. *Clarissa to Miss Howe.* Her condi[illegible] ed. In what particulars. Her mind begins to strengthen; and she finds herself at times superior to her calamities. In what light she wishes her to think of her. Desires her to love her still, but with a weaning love. She is not now what she was when they were *inseparable* lovers. Their views must now be different.

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LXXVII. *From the same.* The lady parts with some of her laces. Instances of the worthiness of Dr. H. and Mr. Goddard. He severely reflects upon Lovelace.

LXXVIII. *Lovelace to Belford.* Has an interview with Mr. Hickman. On what occasion. He endeavours to disconcert him, by assurance and ridicule; but finds him to behave with spirit.

LXXIX. *From the same.* Rallies him on his intentional reformation. Ascribes the lady's ill health entirely to the arrest (in which, he says, he had no hand) and to her relations' cruelty. Makes light of her selling her clothes and laces. Touches upon Belton's case. Distinguishes between *companionship* and *friendship.* How he purposes to rid Belton of his Thomasine and her cubs.

LXXX. *Belford to Lovelace.* The lady has written to her sister, to obtain a revocation of her father's malediction. *Defends her parents.* He pleads with the utmost earnestness to her for his friend. Her noble answer and great deportment.

LXXXI. *From the same.* Can hardly forbear prostration to her. Tenders himself as her banker. Conversation on this subject. Admires her magnanimity. *No wonder that a virtue so solidly based could baffle all his arts.* Other in-

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[illegible] *Belford.* Ridicules him on his address [illegible] her banker, and on his aspirations and prostrations. Wants to come at letters she has written. Puts him upon engaging Mrs. Lovick to bring this about. Weight that proselytes have with the good people that convert them. Reasons for it. He has hopes still of the lady's favour. And why. Never adored her so much as now. Is about to go to a ball at Colonel Ambrose's. Who to be there. Censures affectation and finery in the dress of men; and particularly with a view to exalt himself, ridicules Belford on this subject.

LXXXIII. LXXXIV. LXXXV. LXXXVI. LXXXVII. Sharp letters that pass between Miss Howe and Arabella Harlowe.

LXXXVIII. *Mrs. Harlowe to Mrs. Howe.* Sent with copies of the five foregoing letters.

LXXXIX. *Mrs. Howe to Mrs. Harlowe. In answer.*

XC. *Miss Howe to Clarissa.* Desires an answer to her former letter for her to communicate to Miss Montague. Further enforces her own and her mother's opinion, that she should marry Lovelace. Is obliged by her mother to go to a ball at Colonel Ambrose's. Fervent professions of her friendly love.

XCI. *Clarissa to Miss Howe.* Her noble reasons for refusing Lovelace. Desires her to communicate extracts from this letter to the ladies of his family.

XCII. *From the same.* Begs, for her sake, that she will forbear treating her relations with freedom and asperity. Endeavours, in her usual dutiful manner, to defend their conduct towards her. Presses her to make Mr. Hickman happy.

XCIII. *Mrs. Norton to Clarissa.* Excuses her long silence. Her family, who were intending to favour her, incensed against her by means of Miss Howe's warm letter to her sister.

END OF VOL. VI.

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